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IN YOUR BOXING DAY TIMES

Dr Thomas Stuttaford on a healthy start to the new year

PLUS: WHERE TO FIND THE BEST SALES

Women taken to 'scene of the crime'

Nurses could face public execution

By Bill Frost, Joanna Bale and Michael Binyon

TWO British nurses arrested after the murder of an Australian colleague at a Saudi hospital were taken back to the scene of the crime by military police yesterday. If convicted, they could be publicly beheaded, although the chance of a Westerner being executed is slight.

One of the women was last night identified by sources at the King Fahd Medical Complex in Dhahran as Deborah Perry. She is thought to be 36 and to have family in the Midlands.

The other nurse, also single and in her 30s, was named by the same sources as Lucy or Lucille McLaughlin from Scotland. Both are thought to have begun working at the hospital four months ago.

Saudi police were reported to have taken both women from their cells to the "scene of the crime yesterday" as part of the investigation. Fellow hospital staff were said to be "in a mood of complete and utter disbelief" at the murder.

So far, the pair have been denied contact with British diplomats. Last night a senior Foreign Office official in London telephoned his opposite number at the Saudi Embassy asking for "immediate consular access".

Human rights organisations expressed concern over the women's treatment. Amnesty International said "torture is frequently used by the Saudi authorities to extract confessions and the nurses might face months on remand before coming to trial".

Under sharia — strict Islamic law — the women could face execution by beheading if convicted. Clemency is in the hands of the bereaved family: a murderer is spared only when they indicate a willingness to forgive, usually after the payment of compensation. Saudi law does not, in



Yvonne Gilford: "one of the last Nightingales"

theory, distinguish between Saudis and foreigners. Muslims and Christians. Drug dealers, murderers, rapists, child molesters and terrorists are publicly beheaded. However, although dozens of Asians and Africans working in Saudi Arabia have been executed for murder, sex and drug crimes, so far capital punishment has not been enforced on any European.

Executions are normally carried out immediately after Friday prayers in the courtyard of a mosque. The accused is dressed in white and generally heavily sedated.

The British women, arrested in Dhahran on Friday, are being questioned about the murder of Yvonne Gilford, a 55-year-old Australian. The senior theatre nurse was described by colleagues as "one of the last of the Florence Nightingales".

All three worked at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex in Dhahran. Miss Gilford's body was found in her room on December 11. She had been stabbed four times, battered with a hammer and smothered. The murdered woman's brother said last night that he was surprised when he heard two British nurses were being questioned.

Frank Gilford, from Jamestown, South Australia, added: "It does seem odd." He was confident the Saudi authorities would conduct the murder inquiry fairly, and added: "I am hoping Yvonne's body will be returned soon so that we can arrange a funeral," he said. "She was a caring person. She loved her new job."

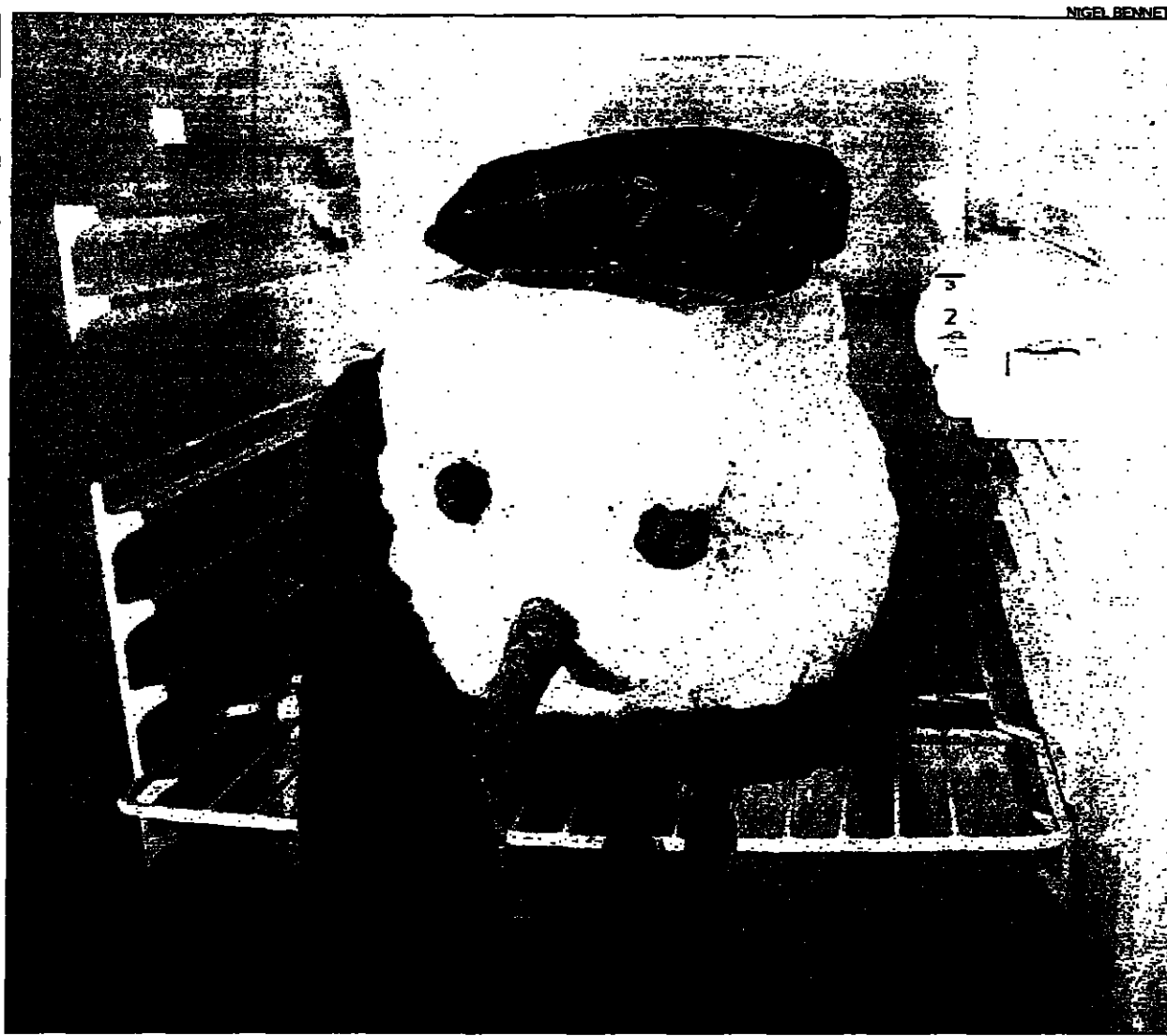
Miss Gilford went to Saudi six months ago from South Africa because she thought it a safer country. Gay Wiggill, a Johannesburg colleague, said: "She lived for nursing. She was one of the last of the Florence Nightingales."

The two British women were arrested as Saudi police questioned staff. An unconfirmed report said they had "confessed". Both were recruited by a London-based nursing agency, Arabian Careers. The company has an exclusive contract to recruit staff for three Dhahran hospitals.

Eleanor Field, its managing director, said she had been told by the King Fahd hospital that the women had "been accused of Miss Gilford's murder". Mrs Field said: "This is very worrying for all of us. I feel very sorry for the families. My heart goes out to all of them, including the family of the dead woman."

Female staff at the hospital last night demanded better security, including closed-circuit television monitors. Two years ago a Filipino nurse was stabbed to death there.

After Miss Gilford's murder, all 1,600 staff at the base were refused permission to leave and foreign nationals had their passports confiscated. Some 40 British staff at the hospital were told they could not go home for Christmas. A Riyadh Saudi newspaper said that a Saudi national to death after a brawl was beheaded in public yesterday, state-run television revealed.



Cold comfort: Frostie prepares for his outing after spending the year in top form in the family freezer

Frostie the snowman keeps his cool

By Lin Jenkins

A DOTING couple have ensured that their two sons will have a white Christmas by keeping Frostie the snowman in the freezer all year.

Luke Muren, six, and his two-year-old brother Jacob, built their first snowman in last January's blizzards. But their excitement dissolved as he began to melt.

Their father Tim, 25, a civil engineer, decided to avoid the tears by removing Frostie's head and putting it in the family freezer.

Luke and Jacob have kept an eye on it throughout the year by occasionally checking on the carrot nose and coal eyes. They have even periodically dressed it up in its red scarf and checked cap. Another freezer was installed in the cellar to store food as Frostie's head occupied the one in the kitchen.

The boys failed to notice when their mother Laura, 25,



Jacob Muren, left, with his brother Luke



proved so heavy over the festive season that Frostie's head, weighing 6lb, has been dispatched to the yard. He is not yet melting, since temperatures are low, but he has suffered the ignominy of Raymond the rabbit eating his nose.

Christmas Day for Frostie will be dry, bright and largely snowless, according to the London Weather Centre. Only Scotland and parts of the east coast of England can expect a light coating of snow. Temperatures will mainly hover around 3C, but strong winds are expected. Today will be mainly dry with sunny spells.

Forecast, page 20

Road rage girlfriend goes home to her daughter

By Daniel McGrory

TREMBLING and looking pale, Tracie Andrews, charged with the murder of Lee Harvey, her fiancé, who, she claims, was the victim of a road-rage incident, returned to her mother's home last night. She had earlier been freed on bail to spend Christmas with Karla, six, her daughter.

She refused to comment on her three days in a Gloucester prison, but John Andrews, 53, her father, said: "As you can appreciate, we have only just arrived home, but we are all elated. It's the best Christmas present we could have. Tracie is still spaced out and can't take it all in. She just wants to rest."

Freeing Miss Andrews, a judge at Oxford Crown Court dismissed police fears that Miss Andrews, 27, a former model, might attempt suicide. A condition of her bail is that she stay with her mother, Irene, and Alan Carter, her stepfather, until she appears in court again in February. Their house is on the same estate in Alvechurch, Hereford and Worcester, as the maisonette she shared with her fiancé.

After she arrived home, Mr Carter said: "Obviously this is a very emotional time for us, all and we would appreciate a bit of peace and quiet together. We are all very happy that she's home."

In a 75-minute hearing in chambers, Judge Peter Crawford, QC, granted a defence appeal that magistrates at Redditch had been right to grant her bail last week. The prosecution had succeeded in having that ruling reversed.

Detectives feared she might try to kill herself because she had taken a drugs overdose days after giving a tearful television account of how her fiancé had been stabbed 37 times.

Continued on page 2, col 3

Ted Leadbitter dies at 77

Ted Leadbitter, the former Labour MP for The Hartlepool who exposed the traitor Sir Anthony Blunt, has died in hospital after a road accident.

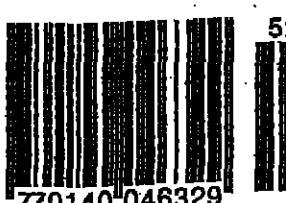
He was 77 and had retired from Parliament at the last general election after 28 years.

The Times

The Times, in common with other national newspapers, will not be published on Christmas Day. It will appear again on Boxing Day.

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The Times on the Internet
<http://www.the-times.co.uk>



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WEATHER 20
CROSSWORDS 20, 40

Europe cuts cost of love

The cost of a true lover's Christmas has been dramatically reduced by shopping in Europe for this year's Times costing of the gifts listed in the traditional song *The Twelve Days of Christmas*.
Report, page 6

God with us

"At Bethlehem God is with us in weakness as a newborn child. He is the crucified Lord who knows the agony of a Dušanovic or a Rwanda from the inside... He is now and always the God who is with us."
Leading article, page 15

Fears rise for missing girl

By Ian Key and Lin Jenkins
LATE-NIGHT Christmas shoppers and vagrants were being questioned last night by police hunting for a nine-year-old girl missing since Thursday.

More than 70 officers showed a photograph of Kayleigh Ward to people on the streets in Chester in the hope that they might have seen the girl.

Detectives believe that Kayleigh, who went missing as she walked to buy chips from a shop after attending a school disco, might have tried to make her way back to the area of Chester where she used to live or go to the city centre where she often went while playing truant from school. She was known often



Kayleigh: streetwise

to speak to vagrants and others on the street. Fears are growing that she might have come to harm. Two men had recently approached a number of children trying to entice

them into their car. Kayleigh has in the past turned up after a few hours missing at the home of her aunt, Beverly Ward. One child claims to have seen her on a bus going to the city centre on Friday.

Detective Superintendent David Jones, leading the search, said: "As time goes by I am becoming more and more concerned. The fact that she is streetwise can be as dangerous as it is helpful."

Kayleigh's mother, Yvonne Ward, 36, who has two other children, moved from the outskirts of the town in October. Beverly Ward issued an appeal on behalf of the family: "We just want her back. My message to Kayleigh is 'Please, come home and give us back our Christmas'."

Hostages tell of joy at their release

Lima: Two Britons freed by Peruvian terrorists after six days' captivity said they were "hugely relieved" but called on their captors to free the 140 men still held at gunpoint (Gabriella Garnini writes).

"I am so glad to be out and will be with my family for Christmas. But we cannot forget those who are still captive," said Roger Church, a senior diplomat.

Mr Church and David Griffiths, manager of a luxury hotel in Lima, were among 225 hostages released early yesterday in what the rebels called a "Christmas gesture".

Hostages freed, page 7

Mountain-top meditator turns unwanted rescuers away

By Alan Hamilton

A BUDDHIST seeking to celebrate the winter solstice on top of a Welsh mountain thought he had found the required peace and contentment — until it was shattered by the arrival of an RAF helicopter and a mountain rescue team bent on saving his life.

The solitary meditator, surprised by the intrusion and alarmed that he had caused an unnecessary incident, politely informed the eight members of the

South Snowdonia mountain rescue team who had interrupted their Christmas party to find him that he was safe and well, and wished only to be left alone. The rescuers retreated, leaving him extra food and hot drinks, and making him promise to report to the police when his contemplation was over.

He had chosen one of the coldest nights of the year on Cader Idris near Dolgellau for his vigil. The air was crisp and clear, but winds approaching

60mph created a potentially fatal chill factor, and made flying difficult for the helicopter from RAF Valley on Anglesey which had been scrambled to help find the man, after other walkers had reported seeing a lone climber apparently with a head injury.

Barry Ellis, leader of the mountain rescue team, said yesterday that the man, believed to be a 50-year-old from Milton Keynes, had been clothed in adequate mountaineering gear and wrapped in a sheepskin when he was

found. "He had a slight head cut from falling on ice but it was not serious. He told us he was a Buddhist and he wanted to contemplate for the night. He was very concerned that he had caused a problem and put us to trouble."

Satisfied that the Buddhist was safe, the rescuers gave him extra food and a flask, then left. Last night they reported that he had descended safely.

Leading article, page 15

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LETTERS 15, 25
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LIBBY PURVES 14

Major sanctions £7m 'blitz on Blair' strategy

JOHN MAJOR is to take the Tory party into the most expensive negative political advertising campaign in British election history.

The £7 million publicity offensive announced last night by Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, will be dominated by personalised attacks on Tony Blair, and on Labour's taxation and spending policies.

The Conservative leadership, undaunted by criticism of its "demon eyes" advertisement, will return to a similar theme in the four-month campaign, which will be unveiled on January 6. It has been devised by Lord Saatchi, Sir Timothy Bell, and Baron Chadlington, the party's experts on advertising, and

was presented to the Cabinet last week. Thousands of poster sites have been booked until polling day, which is assumed to be May 1. The posters will be changed about once a month.

The advertisements will highlight Mr Blair's policy changes since he became an MP in 1983. His opposition to the Thatcher trade union reforms, support for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and early opposition to membership of the Common Market will form the main thrust of the attacks.

Mr Major, who in the past has expressed misgivings about negative advertising, has been won over. One senior Tory strategist

■ The Tories believe the costliest ever negative advertising campaign can help them overhaul Labour's lead in the polls and build on the success of the 'demon eyes' posters. Andrew Pierce reports

said: "Of course it's negative advertising. Labour's will be the same. It will be the most negative advertising campaign so far. The gloves are off." Mr Major was so enthused by the strategy, which was unveiled by Dr Mawhinney, that he told friends afterwards: "I have never felt so optimistic about our chances."

The Tories' private polling has

shown that despite criticism by churchmen, the demon eyes campaign was a startling success among focus groups of floating voters, who for the first time began to question what lay behind Mr Blair's smile.

The Tory source said: "The word 'trust' will be a key feature. We will be saying, how can you trust this man who has changed so much?"

Has he really changed? We will ensure Tony Blair's past catches up with him. It is the logical extension of the 'New Labour, New Danger' strategy.

Lord Saatchi, Sir Timothy, and Lord Chadlington, dubbed The Three Musketeers at Conservative Central Office, have also invented a new Labour tax campaign. It focuses on £30 billion of spending to which the Tories claim the Labour Party is committed. "Tax and trust. It's worked before, it will work again," said a Tory Central Office official.

The leadership has drawn up a high-risk strategy on Europe which seeks to portray Mr Blair as a man who will join over British powers

en masse to Brussels. Ministers believe the attacks will not trigger renewed fighting by focusing on the threat to sovereignty posed by a Labour government.

Labour's proposed windfall tax will be portrayed as an assault on the millions of small shareholders who cashed in on the Tory privatisation policies. The minimum wage will be presented as a tax on jobs which could push unemployment back over the two-million mark.

Millions of pounds have poured into Central Office coffers as the election approaches. Only three years ago the party was £18 million in the red. The debts have been paid off and the party finances

have been transformed to enable Mr Major to fight the most extravagant campaign so far. Labour's huge lead in the opinion polls galvanised many disillusioned Tory donors to return to the fold.

A £200,000 "war room" has been set up at Central Office to co-ordinate the election campaign. A state of the art rapid rebuttal computer system, similar to Labour's "Excalibur", is up and running. It has access to Tory and Labour election material dating back to 1929. Extra staff are being taken on.

The Tory source said: "The strategy is in place. The money is available. The election campaign proper begins next week."

'Hospitals send elderly home early to save cash'

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of elderly patients are being discharged from hospital too early in an attempt to save money, and then need readmitting days later, Labour said last night.

Tessa Jowell, the Shadow Health Minister, condemned an increase of more than 11 per cent in readmissions since the NHS market was introduced in 1991, and said that the "revolving door" policy had in fact cost the taxpayer an extra £500 million over the past four years.

Ms Jowell blamed the rise in readmitted patients on added pressure to reduce NHS waiting lists and make beds available. Hospitals that run out of cash are entitled to release beds for patients referred by GP fundholders who have their own budgets, enabling them to jump the NHS waiting lists.

"The Tories have created a conveyor belt NHS where patients are patched up and sent home," Ms Jowell said last night. A Labour Government would make reducing the number of readmissions a priority, she said.

Some 57,231 patients aged over 75 were readmitted last year within 28 days of being discharged from hospital, costing £128.3 million in 1994-95. In 1991-92, 51,402 elderly patients were readmitted, costing £115m. The total number of emergency admissions for patients aged 75 or over last year was 806,076.

Ms Jowell will use the figures to promote Labour's proposals for a "recovery service" for elderly people, to be announced in the new year.

Labour plans to test a number of pilot schemes to find out the best way of giving elderly people additional support before they go home, such as extra convalescence places. The cost would be met by the decrease in readmissions for this age group.

Elderly patients tend to stay in hospital an average three to four days longer than other adult patients, blocking the beds for other emergency admissions. Beds are more likely to be blocked by the elderly in the winter months, with an increase in viruses and flu-like illnesses.

Hospitals have been under added pressure due to a dramatic decrease in the number of beds, from 489,000 in 1974 to 275,000 in 1995. Ms Jowell said: "Figures show increasing numbers of elderly patients are being discharged from hospitals before they are fit enough to cope alone at home."

Often an extra two or three days bed could make a difference on the way to recovery, she argued. An alternative "halfway house" could be set up to help the elderly convalesce. "There is a yawning gap in the care of elderly people and Labour will be bringing forward proposals for a recovery service for elderly people early next year."

□ Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, is to speed the elimination of mixed-sex wards. In a letter to be sent to all NHS trusts, he is ordering hospital managers to set local timetables for the conversion of wards to single-sex use.



Tracie Andrews after being released from Eastwood Women's Prison last night

Road rage woman freed

times after a car chase through country lanes.

After Miss Andrews was released from Eastwood Women's Prison, she clasped her arms around to face the cameras. As she stood by his side weeping, Tim Robinson, her solicitor, said: "She is overwhelmed by the events of the past few days. She is very pleased to be going home and to her freedom."

He added that the publicity surrounding the case had resulted in "a significant witness" coming forward and that his client was very grateful for that. Police, however

said that they knew nothing about any such development.

Miss Andrews will have to stay with her mother, Irene, and stepfather Alan Carter at their three bedroom home until she appears in court again in February.

Miss Andrews was driven away for a private reunion with her family and Karla, her six year old daughter from a previous relationship.

Her stepfather, Alan Clark, said: "We are delighted and relieved that she will be able to spend Christmas with her daughter and the family."

The Judge's decision is just

confirmation of our belief in Tracie's innocence."

The prosecution alleged at last week's hearing that Miss Andrews was a violent woman who had pulled a knife on her fiancé and on a previous boyfriend. Magistrates heard how she had a row with Mr Harvey earlier on the day he died and that the couple had argued over a black woolen hat that she had shown him as a joke.

Mr Harvey was stabbed in the neck, face, back, head and upper body. Two main arteries were severed.

Teachers challenge pensions changes

By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

A TEACHERS' union is to take Gillian Shephard to court over changes in early retirement rules for teachers which, it claimed, were "slipped out" in the run-up to Christmas to avoid criticism.

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) consulted Cherie Booth, the barrister who is married to Tony Blair, before launching its action against the Education and Employment Secretary. The case will be heard early in the new year when the union will seek an injunction preventing the rules from being applied.

Teaching unions have been swamped with calls from anxious members since Mrs Shephard announced that from April the costs of early retirement would have to be borne by schools. The ATL, the third biggest union, has taken 12,000 calls in six weeks.

Conscious that most schools would not be able to afford early retirement packages, thousands of teachers hope to beat the deadline. But last week the teachers' pensions agency warned schools that applications would be granted in March only under strict conditions. Staff could not be taken back on temporary contracts. The ATL argues that Mrs Shephard acted unlawfully in making the change without notice or consultation. It will claim the restrictions contravene established practice.

Peter Smith, the union's general secretary, said: "We believe the Government slipped this out just before Christmas in the hope that no one would notice. Mrs Shephard has been rumoured. While she seems intent on playing Scrooge with teachers' and lecturers' livelihoods for Christmas, she will now find herself hauled before the courts in the new year."

Dying man moved on by hospital guards

A man died hours after two nurses asked security guards to move him away from their hospital's gates because they thought he was acting suspiciously. A short time later the man collapsed with hypothermia in freezing temperatures. He was found by two other off-duty nurses about 300 yards from St Mary's Maternity hospital, Manchester. They tried to revive him, then phoned an ambulance to take him to Manchester Royal Infirmary, where he died an hour later. Health officials were investigating the claims last night and trying to identify the nurses involved. Staff at St Mary's were being questioned about the incident, which happened at the weekend. The victim, who has not been identified, is thought to be aged 40 to 60, and was unshaven with a blue waist-length, zippered anorak. He had no identification but was wearing signet rings.

Christie murder case remand

A 32-year-old man was remanded in custody charged with the murder of Russell Christie, younger brother of the Olympic athlete Linford Christie. Simon Williams, unemployed, of no fixed address, will reappear before Marylebone magistrates on December 30. Russell Christie, 34, died in hospital on Friday from stab wounds after police found him lying on a road in Notting Hill, west London. Linford Christie, 36, has flown home from training in Australia to console his father James.

Ten jailed for Benn fight riot

Three men were jailed for six months and seven for three months for violent disorder at the world boxing championship fight between Nigel Benn and Juan Ginepez of Spain at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham in September 1994. The violence, which involved more than 100 spectators, started when rival Birmingham City and Manchester City football supporters clashed. Judge Elizabeth Fisher, sitting at Birmingham Crown Court, described the scenes as disgraceful.

Viewers vote for Blair

Tony Blair has been voted Man of the Year by Television viewers for the third successive year. The Labour leader received 53 per cent of the 8,422 votes cast, more than three times that of John Major, who came second. The Princess of Wales was the most popular woman, beating Lisa Potts, heroine of the Wolverhampton school massacre attack, into second place. In a second contest the Prime Minister was voted "Turkey of the Year", well ahead of last year's winner, the Prince of Wales, and the footballer Paul Gascoigne.

French tourist found dead

A French woman in her thirties has been found dead near her Irish holiday home, a two-storey farmhouse near Schull in west Cork. Her partly clothed body was found yesterday in a remote lane by a local man on a morning walk. The woman, who was identified locally as Sophie Boumial from Paris, had suffered head injuries. She arrived in Ireland last Friday and had been due to return to France today. It was understood that she had been staying at the farmhouse on her own.

Banknote trickster jailed

A trickster who convinced his victims that he could turn paper into banknotes and duped two men into handing over £18,000 each, was sentenced yesterday at Southwark Crown Court to 18 months' jail for conspiracy to defraud. Claude Ismael, 41, from Paris, told businessmen that he had already made millions of pounds for President Mandela of South Africa. Jean Garin Dakou, 30, of Albany Street, Camden, north London, was also jailed for 12 months after admitting conspiracy to defraud.

Teacher's trust raises £52,000

A trust fund set up in memory of Gwen Mayor, the teacher killed in the Dunblane massacre, has raised £52,000. The Gwen Mayor Trust will be formally established next month to benefit arts and sports projects in Scottish primary schools. A total of £7.3 million is now held in three funds, the largest being The Dunblane Fund standing at £4.5 million, which will be distributed mainly among the families of the dead and injured.

MoT certificate scrapped

The MoT certificate is to be replaced by computer records as the Government tries to eradicate fraud costing millions of pounds. John Bowis, the Road Safety Minister, announced plans to link 18,000 MoT testing stations to a central computer. Details of each test would be entered into a database which could be checked by police and insurers. Motorists will be given a computer print-out after the test instead of the existing certificate.

Record Christmas post

The Post Office has delivered a record number of Christmas greetings, handling two billion cards and letters. John Roberts, its chief executive, said: "For eight consecutive days Royal Mail has been handling more than 100 million letters and cards every 24 hours — a huge achievement." On Monday, December 16, more than 128 million items, nearly double the normal daily volume, were handled, the largest number ever posted in a single day.

Baby penguins go public

Three blackfooted penguins made their public debut at London Zoo yesterday. Rudolf, Tinsel and Nigel, who were born there ten days ago, will become permanent occupants of the penguin pool early in the new year. Blackfooted penguins originate from the South African west coast and since 1950 as a result of over-fishing, illegal collection of eggs and oil pollution.

Mayhew will not penalise loyalists over car bomb

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

SIR PATRICK MAYHEW fought yesterday to keep the Ulster peace process alive when he indicated that loyalists would not be expelled from the Stormont talks after the weekend car bombing in Belfast.

As loyalist politicians said the loyalist ceasefire was intact, the Northern Ireland Secretary praised them for repudiating the car bomb attack on Sunday which injured a notorious republican.

Sir Patrick's comments came after the two fringe loyalist parties with links to terrorists dissociated themselves from the bomb attack on Eddie Copeland, who was named in Parliament in 1994 as an IRA leader.

Gary McMichael, leader of the Ulster Democratic Party, the political wing of the Ulster Defence Association, said: "It is terrible, it is tragic. I am opposed to violence from whatever the source." He

stopped short of condemning the bombing.

Mr McMichael said that the failure of the Combined Loyalist Military Command to issue a statement after the attack indicated that its two-year-old truce was still in place. His comments increased speculation in Belfast that the bomb may have been a warning by loyalists — possibly the UDA — to the IRA to end its violence or risk a return to widespread tit-for-tat attacks.

Loyalist sources made clear that the IRA's attempt to murder two police officers in a children's hospital on Friday as they guarded a senior Unionist could not go unanswered. However, security sources said that even a warning shot was fraught with risks in the present atmosphere.

Sir Patrick welcomed Mr McMichael's criticisms of the bombing, which contrasted with Sinn Féin's failure to

repudiate the IRA attack on Friday night. Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, said he regretted the shooting.

Sir Patrick told BBC Radio 4's Today: "I notice that both [loyalist] parties have denounced this... That seems in very marked contrast with the leader of Sinn Féin." The Northern Ireland Secretary refused to speculate on whether the loyalists would be expelled from the talks but his comments indicated that ministers want them to remain at the negotiations.

Sir Patrick's comments infuriated republicans, who said it was hypocritical of him to praise loyalists when they had failed to condemn the bombing.

□ More than 100 republican and loyalist terrorists were released from Northern Ireland jails yesterday on Christmas parole. The Irish Government released 20 republican prisoners on parole.

Trimble attacked over deal

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND NICHOLAS WATT

A ROW over David Trimble's leadership of the Ulster Unionists erupted yesterday after his decision to join with Sir James Goldsmith in campaigning for a referendum over Europe.

In return for £200,000 of promotional funding, the Ulster Unionists will campaign in Northern Ireland for a referendum, and Jim Nicholson, the party's sole member of the European Parliament, will join the Europe of Nations political grouping headed by

Sir James, a French MEP. Mr Trimble had to deny that the alliance with Sir James, whose Referendum Party is contesting the general election, would have any influence on Westminster politics. Sir James insists he will not be involved in any other area of Unionist campaigning.

At Westminster, the Tories depend on the Ulster Unionist MPs to keep them in power. Mr Trimble said: "We will continue to vote in the same way as we have done in the

Commons. We will be voting as Ulster Unionists."

John Taylor, the deputy party leader, criticised the decision and said that he had not been involved and that the party's MPs were not consulted. Senior Unionists fear the link could alienate the Tory and the Labour leaderships.

Mr Trimble's opponents, who include most of the party's MPs, are furious with him for negotiating the deal. They say that his failure to inform them was typical.

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ster jailed

£52,000

surprised

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A campanology campaign has failed to recruit 10,000 volunteers to learn the ropes

Steeple fall silent as bell-ringing loses its appeal

BY ROBIN YOUNG

"AND all the bells on earth shall ring / On Christmas Day in the morning," promises the carol. Not this year they won't. A shortage of bell-ringers is keeping many church towers and steeples silent.

Although the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers has been awarded £3 million by the Millennium Commission to repair old and disused church bells so that they can welcome the millennium, the council's campaign to recruit bell-ringers has not yet brought sufficient results to ensure that even those peals of bells already in working order can be used this Christmas.

Estimates suggest that at least 10,000 new bell-ringers are needed to ring the ropes in all Britain's churches. Teams of bell-ringers often have to speed by car from church to church within the space of a few hours. The situation is particularly difficult in areas with few people and many churches, such as Norfolk and Suffolk.

John Anderson, a spokesman for the council, said yesterday: "At the turn of the century, each little village church would have two ser-

vices a day and had its own band of bell-ringers. Now we often find that church benefices have amalgamated, there are fewer services, and as there are far fewer bell-ringers anyway they have to go to different places to ring the bells because there is no one else to do it."

He added: "Churches with perfectly workable peals have no one to ring them. We have launched a drive to recruit new ringers, but the problem is not solved yet. There must be at least 100,000 lapsed ringers in Britain, and it could be as many as 250,000. We need to get lapsed ringers back to the belfries."

Certainly the decline in church attendance cannot have helped and the days when people grew up, lived and died in the same village or town have gone. The pace of modern life means people simply have less leisure time for hobbies.

Vaughan Evans, a former secretary of the Handbell Ringers' Association of Great Britain, who is also a church bell-ringer at Grantham, Lincolnshire, said: "We have ten bells in Grantham, but at evensong we are often lucky to

get six ringers. The situation is a bit easier in vacations, when young ringers come home from universities."

Brian Threlfall, a member of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, said: "There are certainly more bells than ringers, though the situation changes from locality to locality and from time to time. Some churches with ringable bells will not have their bells rung this Christmas, but it is difficult to know how many."

The Rev Barry Fry, master of the Winchester and Portsmouth Guild of Church Bell-ringers, and a former tower captain of the ringers at Brockenhurst, Hampshire, said: "We are better off than some other areas, but we will have churches with workable bells and no one to ring them this year. It is early days for the recruitment campaign to show results. It takes time to train people so that they are ringing the bells and not vice versa."

Robert Cater, secretary of the guild, said: "Of 200 churches with ringable bells in our two dioceses, it seems 15 will not be rung this Christmas, which is very sad. We reckon we are 150 ringers short in total, but it only takes one or two families to go away from a parish sometimes to mean the bells cannot be rung at all." Mr. Cater, a cathedral ringer at Winchester, expects to be pulling a rope at Hinchin, Hertfordshire, this Christmas.

A practised campanologist said: "Bell-ringing just isn't an easy thing to do. It takes physical and mental skill, coordination, fitness and a lot of practice. Few people today are willing to devote the time to learning it and keeping in practice. I have seen thousands of people drift away from it. It is a shame because bell-ringing is part of our heritage and a mechanical carillon is no sort of substitute."



Ringers require mental skill, fitness and dedication



Boys from the Westminster Cathedral Choir in full voice yesterday at rehearsals for midnight Mass, to be broadcast on BBC1

North leads the last-minute rush

BY A STAFF REPORTER

BANK cash machines ran out of money yesterday at the huge MetroCentre in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, where two car parks were full by nine in the morning. "We opened the malls early to let them out of the cold," a spokesman said.

At the Arndale Centre in Manchester, staff said the shops were busier than last week. Jackie Moores, the centre's general manager, said: "We are very busy because some stores have started their sales already."

The Royal Bank of Scotland said withdrawals from its cash machines were up 9 per cent to £263 million in the first 19 days of December

compared with last year. The bank's credit card customers spent nearly £125 million in the first 20 days of this month, an increase of 30 per cent on the same period last year.

Shopping malls in the South of England were quieter. The Lakeside Centre at Thurrock, Essex, said: "We are nowhere near as busy as last week. We think most people have done their main shop and now they are going to local shops for last-minute things. We expect our busiest period when the January sales open."

Harrods, in London, said that its sales were brisk. It expected to have a 10 per cent improvement on last year.

Wrap up well for a cold Christmas, forecasters say

BY RUSSELL JENKINS AND SHIRLEY ENGLISH

three of Scotland's five ski centres are expected to be closed on Christmas Day. A weekend thaw, followed by the sudden freeze, has turned snow to ice, making conditions dangerous on some slopes.

At Glenshee, near Braemar, Glenmore, and the Nevis Range near Fort William, the runs are currently too icy to ski. Lower slopes may open on Boxing Day. Skiers are advised to ring before setting out. The only two centres hoping to be open for sport on Christmas Day are the Lecht Ski Centre in Banffshire and the Cairngorm Ski Centre, near Aviemore.

The great Christmas getaway was in full swing yesterday. Gatwick Airport expects 800,000 passengers over two weeks. Heathrow will have seen more than 791,000 passengers in the six days up to Christmas.

Many Mediterranean resorts have had appalling weather, with gales and torrential rain. A Briton, David Baron, 34, died when he was swept away while swimming off Gran Canaria.

In Britain, rail services will start running down at about 10pm. Apart from the Gatwick Express from London's Victoria station to Gatwick, there will be no trains tomorrow and very few on Boxing Day.

Forecast, page 20

Panto's thin blue lines are banned

SENIOR police officers ordered the removal of "offensive" material from a Christmas pantomime at a station which was recently the subject of a sexual harassment inquiry. The officers at Harrogate were told to tone down their script after a member of North Yorkshire police authority complained that jokes were "sexist, offensive to some and, more importantly, anti-gay".

The show - 2001, A Fruit Cocktail - was organised by the sports and social club and sponsored by local companies and ran for four nights last week. Pantos have been held for six years and £2,000 was raised last year for charities.

The programme featured a spoof memo from the panto sub-committee, urging the writers to remove all references to spanking, and self-abuse and banning the pantomime horse from "sporting the genitalia of an African bull elephant".

The order to remove the material was made by the Assistant Chief Constable, Peter Walker. But one officer said: "It was petty and small-minded. There was nothing in the pantomime that you would not see on television. They are always near the knuckle and no one has ever complained before."

Life ban on breeder whose dogs were scared of grass

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A DOG breeder who once produced Crufts winners was yesterday banned from keeping animals for life, after inspectors discovered West Highland terriers living in squalid conditions at her kennels.

Frieda Cook, 76, was reported to the RSPCA by a woman who saw the conditions at Wandelbury Hill, near Cambridge, when she responded to an advert offering dogs for sale. There was no running water, drinking bowls were empty or covered with algae and three dogs, now at the centre of court charges, were diseased or lame.

Inspector Mark Thompson said he was delighted by yesterday's ban. He had told the court: "We tried to examine 15 other dogs but they were very shy. You would expect show dogs and breeding dogs to come up to you quite naturally, but the closer you got to these the further away they went. The vast majority had fleas and conjunctivitis. The three we took away were frightened of walking on grass. They didn't know what it was."

Cook, who was banned by the Kennel Club seven years ago for similar offences, had

been found guilty in her absence at an earlier hearing. After the sentence, she said: "This is a complete travesty of justice. I am very upset at the idea of never having a dog again because they are my life."

"I am totally innocent and would have proved it if I had been allowed to but I could not attend the earlier hearing because I was ill."

She had denied three charges of causing a dog unnecessary suffering, four of administering prescription-only medicines, using a pesti-



Cook dogs are my life, she said

cide for other than its purpose and supplying a vaccine not in accordance with a prescription from a vet.

Magistrates in Cambridge had heard how one animal found at her kennels was emaciated and lame, while another was covered in fleas and suffering eye and ear infections. Tonic pesticides and flea sprays had been used on her dogs to treat skin conditions, resulting in two of the terriers losing nearly 80 per cent of their hair.

One dog was so undernourished, it was emaciated and lame in a back leg, which needed two operations and swimming sessions to cure. Its sister was also underweight, covered in fleas and with chronic ear and eye infections.

The RSPCA was alerted by Sonia Donnelly, who paid £1,500 for a dog after answering an advert. She found that the dog had a chronic ear infection.

Mrs Donnelly, from Ampthill, Bedfordshire, had demanded the return of her money. She said: "At the kennels, I saw some rusty metal shelters were open to the sides. The dogs had no bedding or water. It was absolutely disgusting."

Capital clampdown on competitions after call-in queen rules the airwaves

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

CAPITAL Radio, Britain's leading commercial radio station, is tightening its competition rules after reports that one listener was able to win prizes worth tens of thousands of pounds that included eight foreign holidays and two cars.

The London-based station admitted yesterday that it had no formal rules governing how many prizes any one listener could win, even though such regulations are standard practice among broadcasters. A spokeswoman for Capital, which offers hundreds of thousands of pounds of prizes a year, said it would be easy for somebody to claim prizes under an assumed name because the station asked winners for identification

only when they were picking up prizes worth £50,000 or more.

"We don't ask people if they are who they say they are. We always believe 100 per cent that our listeners are honest," she said. The spokeswoman confirmed that the station was now checking allegations that Lynne Andrews, from Langley in Berkshire, had won at least 20 of its phone-in competitions during the past five years, often under assumed names.

The list of prizes under investigation includes holidays in Las Vegas, Bangkok, Greece, Amsterdam, Paris, New York and Venice, as well as a skiing holiday, several trips to West End theatres, two new cars and a number of four-figure cash prizes. "So far, we have only been able to confirm that she has

won two of the prizes. One is a cash prize of £5,500, which she won two weeks ago, under the name of Trish," the spokeswoman said. "It will take us about two weeks to check the last five years to confirm if she won anything else."

Executives at the station, which has nearly ten million listeners a week, are mystified how one listener could succeed in taking part in so many on-air competitions. Hundreds of listeners from across the South-East of England call the station every day when it is running competitions and the telephone lines quickly jam. Many callers try dozens of times and never even make it through to the studios.

Mrs Langley confirmed she had won "quite a few prizes" but added: "I would rather not say anything."

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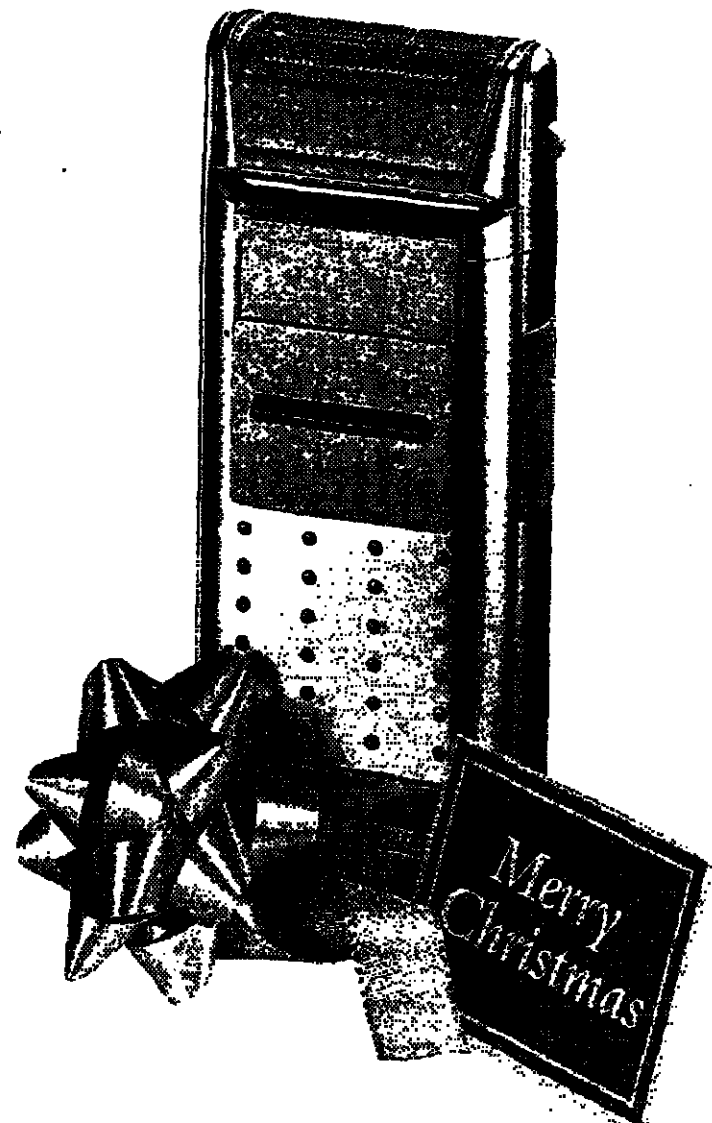
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Holiday chalets are last resort as nimbies threaten plans for new jails to house ever more inmates

Former Pontins camp may be converted into prison

BY RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

PRISON Service officials are negotiating to buy a disused holiday camp to house up to 700 inmates and ease the growing accommodation crisis in jails. A planning application to convert the former Pontins camp at Heysham, near Morecambe, Lancashire, is the latest in a series of emergency proposals.

The 63-acre site has been empty since the Pontins camp closed two years ago. The move to use it for prisoners was made only days before a decision yesterday by Doncaster council to oppose the proposed conversion into a jail of a former RAF base at Finningley in south Yorkshire. The opposition in Doncaster is recurring elsewhere as people fight to stop more prisons and centres for persistent young offenders being built in their neighbourhoods.

The Heysham site, near Preston and Haverigg prisons and Lancaster Farms young



The chalets at Heysham will be surrounded by a five-metre security fence if plans are approved

offender institution, would be converted to hold 400 to 700 low-security category C prisoners. After renovation it could take its first inmates by May next year.

Before becoming a holiday camp, the site was used by the Ministry of Defence and during the war was an internment camp. Richard Tilt, Director-General of the Prison Service,

said the holiday camp was one of a number of options, which included other disused military bases and acquiring a former floating jail moored on the Hudson River near New York. "We look as if we will be back at our full capacity between the middle and end of February."

"We must do everything possible to have accommoda-

tion for those sent to us by the courts. We want to avoid using police cells," Mr Tilt said.

A planning application to reroof the floating prison, *Resolution*, in Portland harbour has been lodged with the local authority. Prison officials who visited the ship recently believe it meets all their requirements to hold up to 500 low-risk inmates.

But Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said: "Buying a holiday camp is an act of utter desperation. Right-wing Conservative MPs have often said that prison is like a holiday camp — now it seems to be coming true."

Pontins said yesterday that it had no other sites available. The Heysham site was sold to a private buyer about two years ago and is about half a mile from the nearest homes. The Home Office plan suggests the camp would be used for three years and require about 300 staff.

No new buildings are



Cleaners report for duty in the heyday of the holiday camp, where prisoners could soon be slopping out

planned and some existing buildings may have to be demolished. The plan includes a five-metre security fence.

The county council said it planned extensive consultation, with an open meeting for local people. The council would look at the impact on the environment: public safety; the possibility of increased traffic and economic benefits.

The prison population is predicted to reach 60,000 by March, following a seasonal drop to 57,000 this week. A further six prisons are being built or are planned to cope with the increase, arising out of the Government's "prison works" policy, and a further 12 will be needed. Mr Tilt expressed concern at the growing "not in my back yard"

opposition to proposed new jails. "The difficulty is that we get driven more and more into remote sites. It is less satisfactory for everything, service, staff and prisoners' families," he said.

In Liverpool up to 50 objections have been lodged against plans to build an extra cell block to hold 118 detainees at the new 600-inmate Altcourse

prison at Fazakerley. In Manchester a full planning inquiry has been held into the proposed Agecroft jail at Salford, and the Prison Service has abandoned a site for a new jail at Telford in Shropshire after a geological survey. Work has still to start on building five secure training centres for persistent young offenders aged 12-14.

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Former Times man tops book list

BY BRIAN MACARTHUR

WITH more than 18,000 copies sold last week of *Notes from a Small Island*, the travel writer Bill Bryson, a former sub-editor on *The Times*, is Britain's bestselling author this Christmas.

Second is Dava Sobel's surprise bestseller *Longitude* (12,280 copies), followed by *Shooting Stars*, the television tie-in from the comedians Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer. Dick Francis's *Come to Grief*, Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity* and Nicholas Evans's *The Horse Whisperer*.

More than 66,000 copies of the paperback edition of *Notes from a Small Island*, the British travelogue published by Black Swan, have been sold in the past eight weeks, earning £460,000, according to Whitaker BookTrack, which monitors sales in more than 700 bookshops. *Longitude*, the bestselling hardback, published by Fourth Estate, has earned slightly more — £550,000 since November. *Winnie the Pooh: Now We Are Seventy* was the bestselling children's book.

The figures demonstrate the importance of Christmas to the book trade. At the beginning of November, sales were running at £10 million a week. Last week they were worth £26 million.

Archbishop appeals to 'spiritual refugees'

BY RUTH GLEDHILL

MANY people today are "spiritual refugees" who have lost their moral and spiritual roots, according to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dr George Carey, referring to the plight of the refugees of Rwanda on this morning's *Thought for the Day* on BBC Radio 4, said: "Jesus was not born in a refugee camp but it was the next thing to it."

The crisis in Rwanda and the birth of Christ made him wonder at the number of lost people in the world today. "They may have comfortable homes and friends around," Dr Carey said, "but they are spiritual refugees, sometimes aware in their heart of hearts that they are living in another kind of transit camp."

Dr Carey continued: "So many people in our society have lost their religious and moral roots. They have lost their place in a shared understanding of what life is for, pursuing short-term happiness but often failing to find spiritual fulfilment."

Christmas was a chance to take stock. "There are many who stay in today's spiritual refugee camp. They have been there so long that they have forgotten about the country Christian people call home, the one where God is King."

Archbishop of York, page 6

Cautionary tales to chill the blood



MEDICAL BRIEFING

THE forecasters have promised a cold Christmas, with biting east winds. This will test the coronary arteries of anybody with cardiovascular disease, whether or not they are aware of the state of their circulation.

When I was a country GP it was comparatively easy to prepare for most of the problems occasioned by hard weather, but impossible to allow for the upset to routine invariably caused by a cold snap. Elderly patients fell and fractured bones; cases of flu turned to pneumonia. The most common emergencies were heart attacks and strokes. Both are more likely up to 48 hours after a patient with a cardiovascular problem has been severely chilled; 20 minutes' chilling is enough to cause the damage.

Problems caused by cold weather are related to changes in the mechanisms involved in blood clotting. When someone has been exposed to very cold weather, the blood clots with greater ease thereafter for 36 to 48 hours as the platelet count (platelets are the small particles involved in blood clotting), the red cell count and the fibrinogen levels are increased. They are all factors which make coronary thrombosis or an ischaemic stroke more likely. An ischaemic stroke results from a wayward

clot blocking a cerebral blood vessel, whereas other strokes are caused when a cerebral vessel ruptures.

Other patients become casualties while shovelling snow. This is a job for younger members of the family, whose arteries are wide open and whose coronary circulation is smooth-flowing. Younger members should also fetch the wood or coal at night, as leaving a fireside to cross a dark, windswept yard is asking for trouble.

A car that has been left overnight in several degrees of frost can seem as cold as a household deepfreeze. Nobody would put a middle-aged or elderly patient with a suspect circulation into a deepfreeze, nor should they expect someone with cardiovascular problems to sit in an ice-cold car while it warms up.

The temperature of the air which is breathed in is also important. In a cold wind, angina can often be prevented by wearing a scarf over the mouth so that the air is trapped and warmed before it is inhaled. If central heating were left on at night, the number of early-morning heart attacks would be reduced.

DR THOMAS
STUTTAFORD

Family
by Chris

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Foie gras imports feed Gallic spleen

FROM ADAM SAGE
IN PARIS

FRANCE'S traditional Christmas is under attack with cheap foie gras from Eastern Europe flooding the country's dinner tables and animal rights militants calling for a boycott of the product.

Producers of goose and duck liver say they are unable to compete with rivals from countries such as Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, which have flooded the French market in recent years.

They want the European Union to impose clear labelling, confident that French consumers will avoid products that they know to be foreign.

Foie gras is a traditional Christmas delicacy in France, where people appear to remain largely insensitive to the campaigns against it by animal rights activists. Despite newspaper advertisements urging a boycott because of the way geese and ducks are forced-fed, demand has increased.

The French get through 10,000 tonnes of it a year, mostly at Christmas, when they pay Fr100 (£11.50) for a small tin in a supermarket and up to Fr750 for a terrine in a Parisian delicatessen.

The activists have had only a minor effect in France and our sales have doubled over the last five years," said Serge Chambert, director of the Foie Gras Association in the Gers county, southwest France.

However, if the animal rights groups have failed to shake his confidence, the Hungarians, Bulgarians and Romanians appeared to have succeeded. About a fifth of the foie gras consumed in France is of Eastern European origin. But it is tinned in France and described as French.

"It is 20 per cent cheaper than anything we produce and although we have brought down our prices, we will never be able to be competitive," M Chambert said. "They have cheap labour and low taxes."

M Chambert wants Brussels to make it illegal for Eastern European goose and duck livers to be labelled as French, even if they are processed in France.

The French Government, aware that any attack on foie gras is likely to be seen by voters as an assault on the Gallic way of life, is backing the producers' demand.

Yeltsin returns to Kremlin with goal of fitter economy

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT YELTSIN returned triumphantly to the Kremlin yesterday declaring that he was "ready for battle" and extending an invitation to John Major to visit Moscow in the new year.

After nearly half a year's absence from his Kremlin office, the Russian leader looked slow but steady as he emerged unassisted from a limousine and was greeted by his staff. In brief remarks to waiting journalists, he said he was confident that the lives of his countrymen would improve in the new year.

However, the Russian leader looked a shadow of the energetic figure who crisscrossed Russia during last summer's punishing election campaign, when he inspired the support of the people and secured his re-election.

On his first day back at the job, he received a 20-minute telephone call from Mr Major welcoming him back to work. Mr Yeltsin asked the Prime Minister to Russia next year, an invitation which he has already extended to President Clinton, Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, and President Chirac.

While his telephone discussion on foreign policy issues may help to reassure Western powers that the Kremlin leader is firmly back in power, the real test will be his ability to tackle pressing domestic problems.

Mr Yeltsin has made it clear that his priority is to resolve the country's economic and social ills, underscoring yesterday by figures revealing that Russia's gross domestic product had shrunk another 6 per cent this year.

He has also committed himself to defusing the crisis in the military and criticism of the way the country was run during his absence, directed particularly at Anatoli Chubais, head of the Kremlin administration.

Within hours the Russian leader was on the receiving end of opposition gibes, largely halted during his prolonged sickness. Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader who stood against him in July's elections, said the Kremlin leader was in no condition to deal with any of the problems affecting the country today.

"Even when he was healthy and sober, he could not come up with an answer to any of the issues facing Russia," Mr Zyuganov said.

The President's doctors remained confident, however, that in spite of his shaky appearance yesterday the Russian leader will soon be back to strength and can expect to lead a normal working life for years to come.

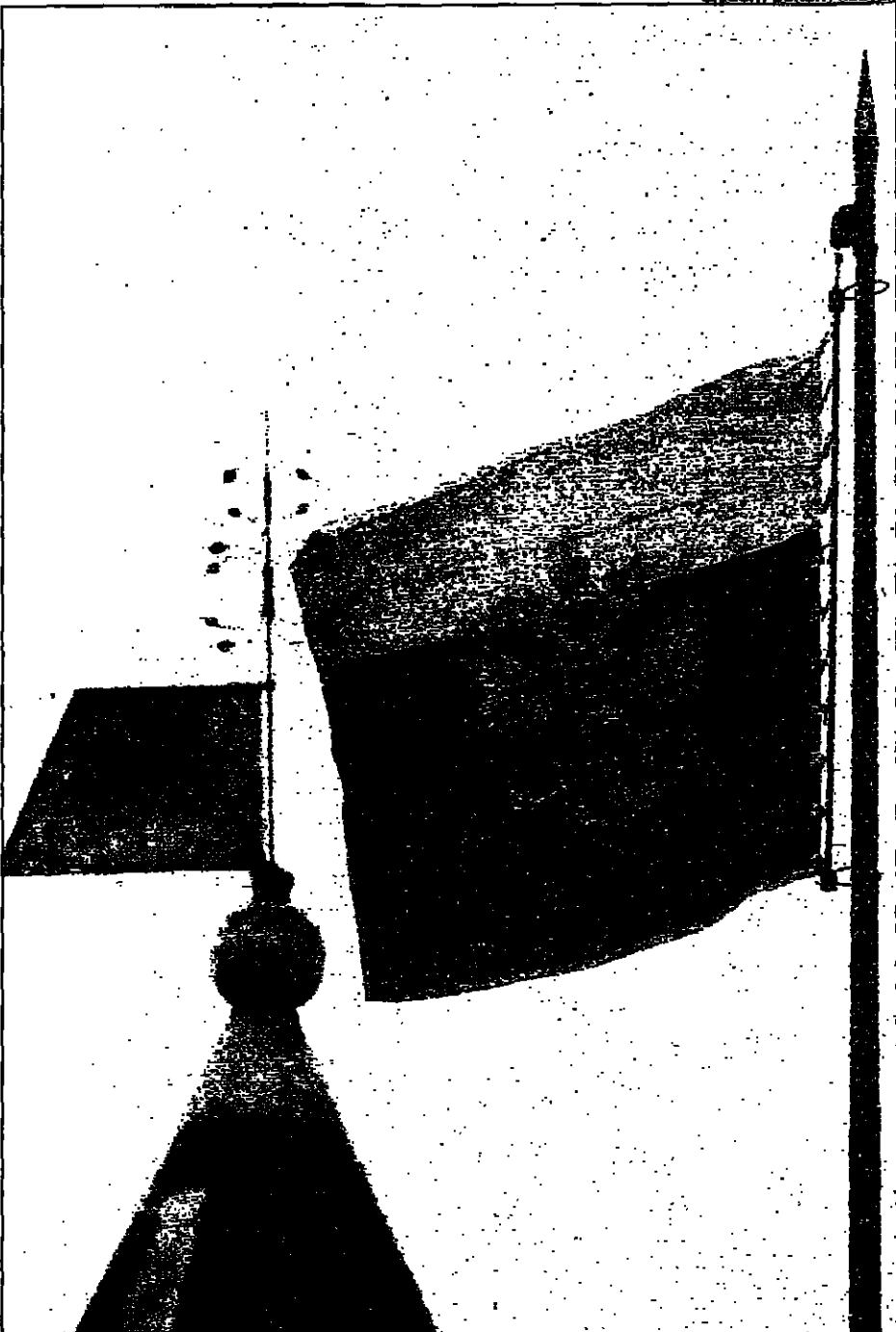
Michael DeBakey, the pioneering American heart doctor who advised on the multiple bypass operation, said Mr Yeltsin should be able to work an eight-hour day and be back to full strength within a month or two.

"I wrote him a personal note recently that, on the basis of our experience, there is no reason why he should not be able to live a normal life, including working, for the next ten years," the heart surgeon told the BBC. "His heart condition is now virtually normal."

Ship blaze: One crew member was killed when a fire broke out on board a nuclear-powered Russian icebreaker yesterday. Tass said the shipping company reported that the nuclear reactor powering the ship was not affected by the fire and there was no radiation leak. (Reuters)



Mr Yeltsin yesterday: confident of progress



The presidential flag is raised at the Kremlin yesterday to welcome back Boris Yeltsin

France faces double threat from guerrilla bombers

BY ADAM SAGE

THE twin terrorist threat facing France was underlined yesterday when police broke up an Islamic fundamentalist "military" cell and Corsican nationalists were blamed for a bomb explosion in Paris.

French police expect attacks by both groups over Christmas. Corsican militants last week declared "war" on Paris, while today is the second anniversary of the hijacking of a French airliner by Muslim extremists, a date detectives believe could signal a fresh wave of violence.

Yesterday investigators said they had found evidence that ten people arrested last week belonged to a "network of Islamic gunmen trained abroad", notably in Afghanistan. Although there is no evidence to suggest any of the ten were involved in the Paris Metro bombing which killed four people this month, detectives said they have links to known terrorists. Seized documents detail the extensive military training received by the young Muslim militants.

The ten were charged with involvement in terrorism by the Paris-based investigating judge, Jean-Louis Brugiere. Their arrest represents a significant success for police in the fight to prevent a wave of terror attacks in France for the second year running. A campaign by three Islamic cells left eight dead and scores injured in 1995.

Detectives believe the fundamentalists could be planning to plant another bomb today to mark the anniversary of the Marseilles Air France hijacking, which ended when police stormed the plane.

However, they are also concerned at the increasingly violent tactics of the Corsican group, the FLNC Canal

Historique, which is seeking the island's independence. The movement attacked mainland France for the first time this year.

Legal authorities said it was probably responsible for the explosion that damaged the National Institute of Statistics in Paris yesterday. If so, it would mark an escalation in the Corsican troubles, as the movement has so far avoided bombing Paris.

The upsurge in violence follows the French Government's decision earlier this year to break off talks with the nationalists after President Chirac called for a crackdown on Corsican terrorism.

Last week the movement's leader, François Santoni, and his partner, Marie-Hélène, were arrested, prompting the group to issue a statement saying: "The police can consider themselves at war."



Soros: this year he gave \$350 million to charity

Soros tops roster of charitable elite

FROM JAMES BONE
IN NEW YORK

GEORGE SOROS, the financier and "failed philosopher" who forced the devaluation of the pound in 1992, was named yesterday as America's most generous philanthropist.

Mr Soros, who manages billions of dollars of offshore funds, topped a list of 25 leading charitable givers prepared by Fortune magazine, giving away about \$350 million (£215 million) this year. The causes included internet access in Russia, the defence of immigrants' rights in America, and getting two US states to back the use of marijuana as a medicine.

Fortune said all but four of the top 25 philanthropists were self-made men. Most attributed their generosity to their religious background. Second on the list was L. S. Skaggs, 73, the retired chairman of the American Stores retail chain, who donated \$155 million. Next was Bill Gates, 41, the chairman of Microsoft, the computer software giant, and America's richest man, who gave \$135 million.

Earlier this year Ted Turner, founder of Cable News Network, accused many Americans of being selfish, saying they should be more interested in topping a list of philanthropists than of billionaires. He was 16th on Fortune's list, giving away \$28 million.

Jesse Jackson leads attack on teaching blacks 'slang talk'

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

THE Rev Jesse Jackson has attacked a California decision to recognise "black English" as a separate language to be taught in schools. In a televised debate at the weekend, he called the move "an unacceptable surrender bordering on disgrace".

Last week's vote by the Oakland Unified School District to make Black English — or Ebonics — the official first language of most of its black children has triggered heated national argument. If anything, black leaders are more angered than white by what they see as an attempt to link sloppy speech and poor classroom results to roots in West Africa and slavery.

"I understand the attempt to reach out to these children," Mr Jackson said on NBC at the weekend, referring to some 20,000 black youngsters in Oakland held back by low school grades. But allowing them to read and write in their street vernacular amounted to "teaching down to our children, and it must never happen".

Later he issued a statement welcoming genuine moves to increase blacks' access to education and jobs but adding, in even stronger language, "In Oakland some madness has taken over, making slang talk a second language. You don't have to go to school to learn to talk garbage."

Maya Angelou, the renowned black poet and novelist, who is a close friend of the Clinton family, has also weighed into the debate. "I'm incensed," she told a Kansas newspaper. "The very idea that African-American language is a language separate and apart is very threatening, because it can encourage young men and women not to learn standard English."

Dismayed by persistent underachievement by black children, who make up 57 per cent of Oakland's schools, officials there adopted a notion popular in some academic circles that the patois of America's black inner-city areas has more in common with West African tribal languages than with standard English. They voted unanimously that Ebonics was a distinct language, and denied charges that the vote was a ploy to qualify for extra federal funds.



Tatiana Johnson, right, reads to her classmates at Parker Elementary School in Oakland, California

Nine die in fire at hospital

Hamburg: Nine German women died in a fire that destroyed a psychiatric hospital dormitory in the small north German town of Rickling, police said yesterday.

The patients who died late on Sunday were aged between 55 and 85. Police said arson could not be ruled out. At first it was thought that only two people had been killed, but seven more bodies were discovered yesterday in the smouldering remains of the building.

Twenty-three people who lived in the wooden hospital were rescued from the building safely. (Reuters)

Hutus arrested over genocide

Ngara, Tanzania: The Rwandan authorities have arrested at least 500 of the 340,000 Hutu refugees who returned from Tanzania this month, UN officials said.

A UN official said the refugees were arrested in connection with the 1994 genocide of about 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. A Hutu refugee lobby group, the Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy to Rwanda, denounced the "false allegations". (Reuters)

Bonino voted top European

Brussels: Emma Bonino, 48, was voted European of the Year (Leyla Linton writes). The jury said she showed "courage, determination and great strength of character" as EU Commissioner for Fisheries, Humanitarian Aid and Consumer Policy. She is noted for backing Spanish fishermen against the British and advocating and practising abortion. The award is organised by La Vie, a French Roman Catholic magazine.



Bonino: backs Spanish

Mutineers hold leader over truce

Bangui: Army mutineers in the Central African Republic have detained Captain Anicet Saviet, their leader, for signing a deal extending a truce in Bangui, the capital, by one month. Elsewhere, hundreds of residents in rebel strongholds in the city's southern districts marched to demand a quick and permanent end to the mutiny that has disrupted their lives. (Reuters)

Singer collapses at White House

Washington: Tony Bennett, 70, the singer, was in good condition in hospital after suffering an erupted hernia at a White House dinner given by President and Mrs Clinton. Mr Bennett, who is enjoying a career revival, has won six Grammys. His best-known hit is *I Left My Heart in San Francisco*.

Killer's fortune goes to victims

Sydney: Martin Bryant, 28, jailed for life for murdering 35 people in Port Arthur, Tasmania, last April, has had all his assets seized by court order (Roger Maynard writes). The proceeds of the \$500,000 estate are to be paid to the injured and relatives of the dead.

Pressure grows on contrite Gingrich

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

CRITICISM was growing yesterday over the Republican rush to re-elect Newt Gingrich as Speaker despite his contrite admission that he broke the House of Representatives' ethics rules.

Party leaders may succeed in persuading rank-and-file Congress members that they still owe allegiance to Mr Gingrich for leading their return to power two years ago.

Already one of the most unpopular politicians in the United States, Mr Gingrich, who had promised to transform the political landscape through aggressive promotion of his *Contract With America*, would, if re-elected, become a weakened figure even within the confines of Capitol Hill. His presence would cast a shadow over Republican attempts to go after President Clinton and other Democrats for a shoal of presumed ethics violations involving campaign

financing. Already, wrangling over his future is undercutting post-election promises by both parties to try to get along.

The January 7 vote for Mr Gingrich will be the first in the new Congress by House Republicans who, for all their solidarity, worry about the reaction of voters. However, no one has emerged in the party to challenge him.

All the fury is being expressed by Democrats who think he should resign over the ethics committee finding that he brought discredit on the House over his handling of tax-exempt funds for a partisan, televised college course, and his admission that he misled the committee with "inaccurate, incomplete and unreliable information".

"We don't need people in the Speaker's chair who lied to Congress," said David Bonior, the Democratic Whip leading the campaign to oust him.

Not-so-perfect tense on Dordogne bar-owner's menu

BY ADAM SAGE

A LINGUISTIC nightmare is facing students of French after a campaign to reinstate one of the most complex points of Gallic grammar, the imperfect subjunctive.

Launched earlier this year, the Committee for the Rehabilitation and Use of the Preterite and the Imperfect Subjunctive — Corpusis — has tapped into a groundswell of opinion in favour of a return to mind-bogglingly difficult conjugations.

As a result, decades of increasing simplicity are in danger of being overturned, to the delight of purists but the consternation of anyone hoping to learn French. Alain

Bouissière, the founder of Corpusis, says his committee has attracted several hundred members, including journalists, teachers and academics, in little more than six months. He believes his success heralds the comeback of verbs ending in "isse", "asse" and "ûre" — all forms that have largely been consigned to history.

An avid reader of French 19th-century literature and the owner of a Dordogne bar, M Bouissière, 50, has been surprised at the committee's meteoric rise since May. He offered an impromptu lesson on the imperfect subjunctive on his bar's terrace this autumn and was taken aback when almost 200 people turned up. "Many people don't want to lose

something that is part of our cultural heritage," he said. "We have a very rich language that has been left to us by our ancestors and we must preserve it."

The popularity of his cause owes much to France's preoccupation with stopping the steady stream of English words seeping into the French language. This has given rise to a large number of associations whose aim is to defend *le français* wherever they believe it is under attack.

Most blame Anglo-Saxon imperialism, but not M Bouissière, who sees the main threat as his country's media. "Television presenters use 'very rudimentary language', he says, while journalism courses ban

the preterite in favour of the perfect tense. Reporters are taught to say *"J'ai vu"* (I have seen) rather than *"Je vis"* (I saw). "There are so many nuances that are lost in this way," M Bouissière said.

The preterite is ignored by an overwhelming majority of French people because of the difficulties in conjugating it. But those pale beside the imperfect subjunctive. So complex are the verb endings in that tense that the French Government passed legislation in 1901 allowing people to use the present subjunctive instead, if they were stuck. M Bouissière says this law, coupled with latter-day media laziness, has put one of the French language's

finest forms at risk of extinction. "People under 30 don't even know what the imperfect subjunctive is," he said. Indeed, today numerous French speakers have discarded the subjunctive — meant to signal that an action is doubtful, possible or desired, whether present or imperfect: they use the present tense.

For example, many would mistakenly say: *"Il faudrait que vous alliez"* ("You should go") — present tense. Under the 1901 law, they could say: *"Il faudrait que vous alliez"* — present subjunctive. M Bouissière and his growing army of purists demand that they say: *"Il faudrait que vous alliez"* — imperfect subjunctive.

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FREEDOM.

Seeds of co-operation wither as Arabs remain suspicious of Netanyahu

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

AS THE political impasse between Arabs and Israelis appears to be easing, both sides are counting the economic cost of the breakdown in the peace process since the election of the Netanyahu Government.

One by one Arab governments are quietly cancelling or putting on hold the high-profile co-operation projects that were announced in a blaze of publicity after the signing of the Oslo accords between Israel and the Palestinians. Public hostility

to the Netanyahu Government throughout the Arab world has tainted almost all projects in which the Israelis are visibly involved. Companies that were proposing to invest in Israel as a new regional centre for their Middle East operations are having second thoughts.

The main casualties have been projects that were still in their infancy. During the Rabin and Peres Governments, grandiose ideas were proposed at two regional economic conferences in Casablanca and Amman. They included a Red Sea-Dead Sea

canal, the comprehensive development of the Jordan Valley, and the sale of huge quantities of gas from Egypt and the Gulf to Israel. Though not officially cancelled, there has been no movement on any of these projects for six months.

Egypt and Jordan, Israel's two Arab neighbours which had done most to trumpet the "peace dividend" resulting from their unpopular treaties with Israel, are playing down economic co-operation. Jordan recently postponed a planned exhibition in Amman of

Israeli economic achievements, which was to have opened earlier this month.

Egypt has put on hold a gas pipeline to supply the Israeli market. Qatar and Oman have frozen their tentative steps to diplomatic recognition of Israel, and there is a question mark over the proposal to sell large quantities of Gulf gas to Israel. A long-term proposal for a "peace pipeline" to bring water from Turkey to Israel's thirsty fields has run up against the continuing impasse in peace negotiations with Syria.

Economists note, however, that the picture is mixed. Some of the more ambitious ideas have been dropped, as much because of their economic impracticality as because they are too controversial. Others are quietly going ahead. These include the Midor oil refinery in Egypt, being jointly built with Israel, and an Israeli-backed textile plant in Jordan.

Jordan has gone farthest and fastest in trying to win economic benefits from its peace treaty. Cross-border tourism is thriving, and an Eilat-based hotel group is

to finance a new hotel in neighbouring Aqaba. The Japanese are ready to provide the money for new bridges across the River Jordan to link Jordan directly with Israel, instead of going through the Palestinian Authority on the West Bank. Jordan has just negotiated a new deal allowing it to export cement to Israel directly.

Nevertheless, Jordan is having to play down the extent of its economic co-operation. This is especially the case with textile subcontracting, where Jordanian factories are picking up Israeli orders

that would have gone to the West Bank. With Palestinians barred from entering Israel, Jordanians have also been taking over jobs there. Both issues are sensitive, however, and Jordan is unwilling to highlight these links.

Israel, for its part, is now finding a cooler welcome in the Arab world to its overtures for economic co-operation. "We are largely marking time at the moment," said a Foreign Ministry official dealing with the Arab world. "Things are still going ahead, but at a much lower key."

Hopes revive for withdrawal deal on Hebron troops

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI and Palestinian officials last night appeared to be on the verge of clinching an accord which could revive the Middle East peace process. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, unexpectedly joined the talks over the long-delayed troop redeployment in the West Bank town of Hebron.

A deal was expected to be backed by written guarantees from Mr Netanyahu that he would carry out all obligations undertaken by the previous Israeli Government. It is understood that this could mean further troop redeployments in the West Bank, paving the way for these areas to come under Palestinian self-rule.

The Palestinian Authority already controls all the main Arab towns in the territories, with the exception of Hebron, and is demanding larger tracts of land as the basis for forging a future independent state. There was speculation last night that Mr Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian President, might meet to conclude a deal on a pullback from Hebron.

Yitzhak Mordechai, the Defence Minister, said last night that Israel was now more optimistic about a deal. Earlier, Mr Netanyahu met Palestinian leaders at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem.

The peace negotiations were given new impetus by the shuttle diplomacy of Dennis Ross, the United States special envoy to the Middle East, who said he expected an agreement on Hebron soon. Speaking to reporters in Cairo, Mr Ross would not predict exactly when an accord would be signed. He said: "There is still work to be done, but there is new energy in the negotiations."

Mr Ross flew back to Israel last night after briefing Egyptian leaders on the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, seeking their approval in advance for any agreement on Hebron. His apparent success is a remarkable achievement after last week becoming the target of Palestinian suspicions of American bias towards Israel. Mr Arafat said on Friday that he did not want Mr Ross as a mediator.

But yesterday, after meeting Mr Ross for the second time in two days, the Palestinian leader thanked the American envoy for his support. The unexpected progress in the talks came one day after Mr Ross predicted he would return home without any deal being completed over Hebron.

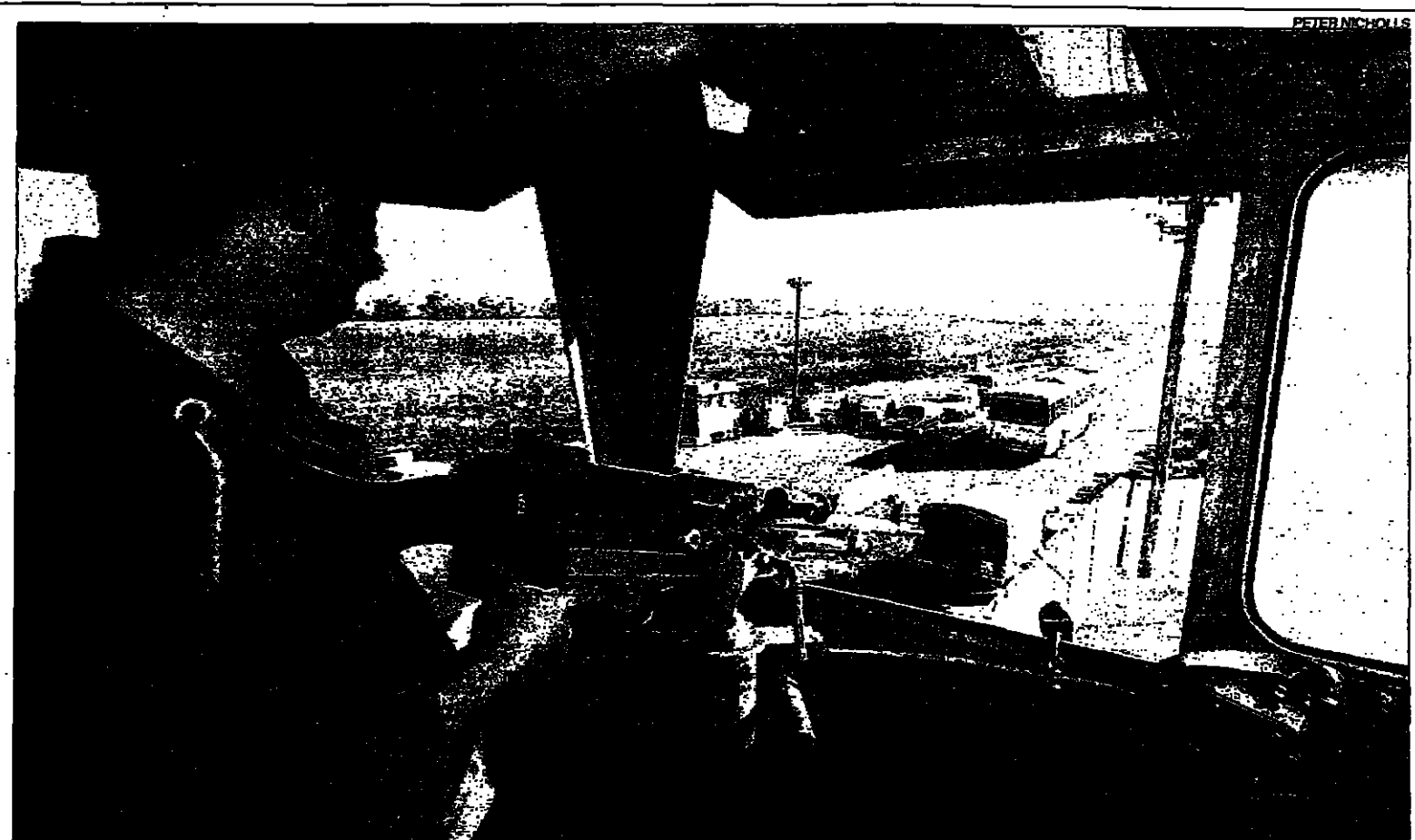
Meanwhile, tensions have been rising in the West Bank town and there were fears of a serious outbreak of violence if

the impasse in negotiations continued. A curfew was imposed on Hebron on Sunday, after Palestinians threw fire bombs at the homes of Jewish settlers. No one was injured in the attacks, but soldiers sniffed the hands of Palestinian suspects to detect petrol-bomb handlers.

The attacks came after the wounding on Saturday of at least two Palestinians during clashes with Israeli troops in the centre of the town. Soldiers entered the fray after fighting broke out between Jewish settlers and Palestinian children. In recent days American officials made clear to Mr Arafat that the situation in Hebron could not be allowed to continue, and he would be the political loser if there was no breakthrough in the talks.

But in return for his co-operation, Mr Arafat demanded that any deal be linked to further redeployments in the West Bank, and it appeared last night that Israel may have given in to this demand. Mr Arafat has also been exerting pressure to halt Israeli plans to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian leader last week received the support of President Clinton, who said Jewish settlements were an obstacle to peace.



An Israeli soldier guards the route along the Jordan Valley where minefields and suicide attacks mar the memory of the holy journey

Roadblocks mark the path to Bethlehem

INTERSPERSED with Israeli roadblocks, flanked by minefields and overflown by F16 warplanes poised to strike Islamic militant bases in Lebanon, Joseph and Mary's route to Bethlehem is today littered with reminders of the tinderbox tension in the Middle East.

Assuming that of the three potential routes argued over by Bible scholars, the couple had chosen to travel through the Jordan Valley, they would today have gone only a few miles before coming across painted rocks by the side of the road in Afula marking the April 1994 suicide bombing at a bus stop.

Seven people died and 52 were wounded in the attack, mounted by Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, in revenge for the Hebron massacre of 29 Muslim worshippers by a New York-born Jewish settler. Many victims were high school students just about to board a bus.

The blast was the precursor of other suicide attacks —



Christopher Walker, Middle East Correspondent, continues his journey along the road from Nazareth to Bethlehem

usually by young single Palestinian men — which reached their peak in February and March this year with more than 60 deaths over a traumatic nine-day period. As a result, Bethlehem and other parts of the West Bank, home to 2.2 million Palestinians, have been blocked off from Israel.

An imposing yellow sign on the new roadblock just south of Bet Shean, the first biblical couple would encounter, reads: "Individual tourists not admitted. Groups allowed with prior permission of IDF (Israel Defence Force) authorities. Tel 305252."

"The block marks the barrier between Israel and what you call 'occupied territory'

that we captured in 1967," said a tough-looking reserve major who runs a Galilee heating company. "No Arab-registered car can come beyond this point and we have agricultural police here to stop them exporting fruit and vegetables illegally."

Adding a bizarre touch to the Christmas story, the major called IDF headquarters on his mobile phone (essential kit for all Israeli soldiers these days) and asked if we could take photographs. "They are following the route of Yosef and Miriam," he added, using the Hebrew names. "There is no security risk."

Minefields still line the border between Israel and Jordan despite the 1994 peace

treaty and Israeli military vehicles patrol day and night looking for the footprints of terrorist infiltrators in the freshly raked sand.

Soldiers on both sides claim that after the initial treaty euphoria, relations have again become strained because of the expansionist settlement policy of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister.

The most striking symbols of the now fragile 1993 accord between Israel and the Palestinians are the joint patrols between Israeli troops and Palestinian policemen operating on the outskirts of Jericho. Once leased by Herod the Great from Cleopatra, the Palestinian-ruled oasis is claimed as the oldest inhabited city in the world.

The patrols were resumed only this month after being curtailed in the wake of the September gunfights between Jewish troops and Arab policemen in which 75 people were killed. In the run-up to Christmas,

Maariv, the Tel Aviv newspaper, quoted IDF officers as being braced for "a new explosion on a level comparable with the events of September."

Climbing once again above sea level, the road passes the sprawling Jewish settlement town of Maaleh Adumim, dominating hillsides barren until a few years ago. Israeli officials say that whatever final peace deal is reached with the Palestinians, the town of more than 20,000 Jews will never be evacuated.

With Israeli occupied territory flanking both sides of Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary would today have to negotiate their way through two more formidable roadblocks before finding there was no room at the inn. One dominates the winding road leading out of the West Bank in the village of Bethany, the site where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and the other — complete with a watchtower — marks the entrance to Bethlehem.

Algiers car bomb kills three

Algiers: At least three people were killed and 70 wounded when a car bomb exploded near one of the busiest cafes in central Algiers yesterday.

An elderly woman who witnessed the attack, similar to others carried out by suspected Muslim fundamentalists in the summer, said the car was driven up to the scene by a young man. "He parked it, got out and ran away," she said. "Afterwards, there was an enormous explosion."

Police and troops sealed off the area around the Novelly cafe in the bustling rue d'Isly after the blast, which came at about lunchtime as thousands of people were milling around the streets. The explosion blew out windows in the area and damaged vehicles on one of the city's main streets.

Nearby residents, in a state of panic, climbed on to roofs and balconies as other people ran away. An employee of the main private daily newspaper,

Liberte, which has premises nearby, sustained head injuries from flying glass.

On Saturday a homemade bomb killed a schoolgirl and wounded another at Douaouda, about 20 miles west of the capital, according to press reports. Le Matin newspaper reported yesterday that armed Islamic groups had killed five people, including two teenagers, on Saturday in the Casbah district, the old town of Algiers. (AFP)

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Red Cross is owed £30m by donors

FROM PETER CAPELLA
IN GENEVA

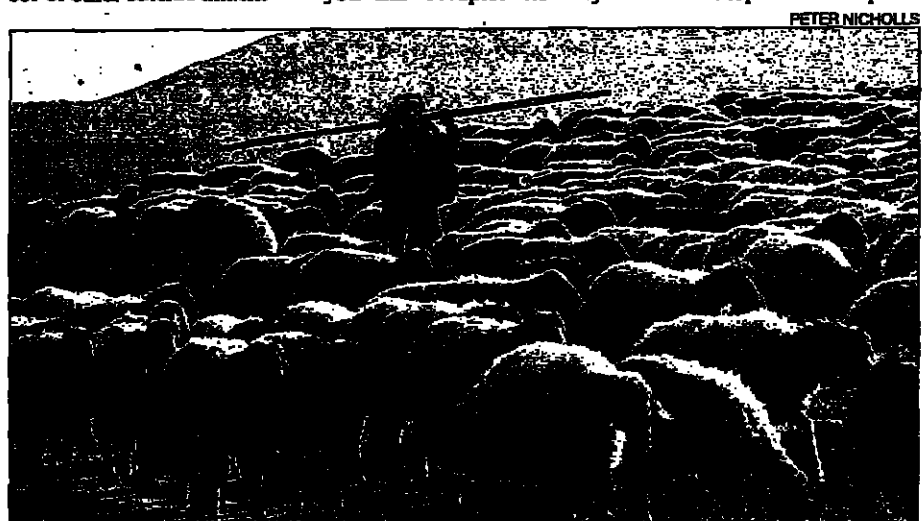
THE International Committee of the Red Cross is on the brink of an unprecedented financial crisis because governments have not paid about £30 million of funds they promised for this year.

At the launch of its annual appeal yesterday, the independent humanitarian organisation, which relies on official contributions from various countries, said that within a week it would be running the first eight-figure deficit in its 133-year history.

A spokesman for the Red Cross said most of the shortfall was due to a lack of support for less publicised relief efforts in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and the Middle East. About one-third of its £500 million budget for next year, £309 million, is expected to be taken up by operations in Rwanda, Afghanistan and former Yugoslavia.

Africa still accounts for the largest proportion of its activities, but work in the former Soviet Union, Asia and Latin America is expected to increase sharply in 1997.

Six ICRC workers were murdered in Chechnya last week, and officials are considering significant changes to the way the organisation works. They said ideas include increasing its reliance on local Red Cross workers in war zones and minimising the use of foreign staff, or even extending its traditional emergency mandate to development and preventive work in potential areas of conflict.



A scene reminiscent of biblical times masks the ever-present threat of violence

200 million hit by Indian power cut

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

NORTHERN India is braced for more candlelit evenings, cold showers, railway disruption, road chaos and dead telephones.

Unusually cold weather is placing impossible demands on a decrepit electricity generation and distribution system that has collapsed five times in a month and threatens to do so again at any time.

The last shutdown, on Friday, was the worst on record, leaving 200 million people without power from about 6.30am for most of the day. Even the VIP (very, very important persons) area of Delhi suffered, for once focusing the minds of the nation's rulers on the problem.

Christmas is increasingly observed as a holiday across India, particularly in the north, and is a time of travel as families seek to reunite. Trains are packed, but on Friday many came to a long

halt, leaving tens of thousands of people stranded.

Telephones died in many areas of Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. For the past three days several branches of officialdom have blamed each other for what went wrong.

It comes down, however, to a lack of competence and political will. That has been proved by Calcutta, once India's power-cut capital. In a brief time an energetic Power Minister ensured West Bengal had all the power it needed. Now it sells electricity to neighbouring areas.

Power problems are likely to continue in northern India well into the next century. Most power stations operate well below capacity because of poor management and bad maintenance. The Government is relaxing its power-generation monopoly, but private operators are unlikely to bring significant relief.

Patten and Chinese successor agree to talks 'as need arises'

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN HONG KONG

CHRIS PATTEN, the Governor of Hong Kong, and Tung Chee-hwa, the colony's future leader, yesterday had a 70-minute formal meeting, their first since Mr Tung's election last Saturday to the Provisional Legislative Council set up by Peking to replace the existing elected Legislative Council next July 1.

They agreed to have further talks in the period leading up to the colony's return to China on June 30. The two shook hands and smiled for photographers after their meeting, but Mr Patten looked more reserved than Mr Tung, and was possibly still smarting from China's perceived snub in establishing the provisional legislature in Shenzhen.

The Governor and Mr Tung, generally known as "C.H.", made brief statements that most observers found mildly encouraging as a sign of power co-operation on the transition to Chinese rule.

"We all know, perhaps I better than anyone, what a challenging job 'C.H.' has running one of the greatest cities in the world," Mr Patten said, as if Mr Tung had already taken over the job. "I know that the whole community wishes him well, and certainly we want to provide as much support as we reasonably can. It was a good and useful meeting and I think we both now deserve a Christmas break, particularly 'C.H.' because he has had to work rather harder than I have."

Mr Patten described the meeting with his future successor as "good, constructive and pretty lengthy", adding: "I have certainly found it extremely useful. We're intending to have further meetings from time to time as the need arises over the coming weeks and months."

Mr Patten said that Mr Tung would meet other senior Hong Kong officials, such as

Anson Chan, the Chief Secretary, "as he needs and sees fit". For his part, Mr Tung said he was sure it was the wish of all the 6.3 million inhabitants of Hong Kong that the transition to Chinese sovereignty should be a smooth one.

"Therefore the co-operation between the Hong Kong Government and the future Special Administrative Region government is a very important aspect of it," he added.

On the subject of the chief difference between himself and Mr Patten, Mr Tung said he had tried to explain the need for Peking's provisional legislature and the necessity for the present Government to co-operate with it.

"The Governor's position is well known to you," he said, adding that it was important for him and Mr Patten to meet regularly, "so we shall do so in the future."

A home at last for Costel



Costel, with his parents, Roger and Tara Hughes. "This is the first proper Christmas Costel has known," says Tara, "so we have tried to make it special for him. We have bought him clothes and toys and a multimedia learning kit to help his education"



Tara Hughes encountered baby Costel in a Romanian orphanage in March 1994. Now after a long struggle she has adopted him and he is in his new home for Christmas. Interview by Jason Cowley

The child who greets you at the door is small, frail but full of laughter. His parents, Roger and Tara Hughes, watch as he builds a tower of plastic bricks, then knocks it over with his hands, the bricks tumbling at his feet. Costel Hughes is three-and-a-half, but he seems much younger. There is something impossibly vulnerable about him. "He has only been walking for six

weeks," Tara says.

The family are preparing for their first Christmas together — 12 months ago Costel was living in a Romanian orphanage. Tara had filed for adoption but, mired in the bureaucracy and labyrinthine politics of post-Ceausescu Romania, she did not know when, or if, she would ever be able to bring Costel home with her.

"I remember 12 months ago crying my eyes out during Christmas dinner — the thought of Costel being stuck in an orphanage, while we celebrated Christmas, was too painful. But this year is different — it is the first proper Christmas he has known, so we have tried to make it special for him. We have bought him clothes and toys, but also a multimedia learning kit to help his education, and a blackboard, which he will have to stand up to use. This should help strengthen his legs."

Tara, 29, began visiting Romania in February 1992, two years after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu. Like many thousands of ordinary people, she responded to the suffering of that country's abandoned children, with their shaven heads and blank stares. For a time, in the early 1990s, it seemed that nearly every school charity event or church fête was in aid of the Romanian orphans.

A busy, self-employed hairdresser (she received spirited support from her colleagues at her salon in Blackheath), she spent her holidays helping at an orphanage in Dărmănești, a small, remote village in the north of the country.

"Working through the Biggin Hill Romanian Relief group and later Bless the Children, I raised sponsorship money to help to fund my trips," she says. "When I first arrived in Romania, I couldn't believe how bad things were. The orphanage itself was absolutely horrendous."

"There was no sanitation, no fresh water and the hygiene was appalling. There were rows and rows of young children in cots, squashed together like little sardines. Many of them were lying in their own faeces. There were times when I couldn't believe what I was seeing, or wanted to."

Her eyes water a little as she remembers. "I cannot forget the smell of the place, it was so overpowering. It hit you as soon as you walked in. All the children were suffering from malnutrition; the only food they had was a kind of gritty gruel. They were also distressed, rocking to and fro, banging themselves against the bars of their cots."

There was also the threat of Aids. "Quite a few of the children I saw had Aids and others were HIV-positive. I saw at least four babies die from Aids."

The problem was made worse by the practice of taking blood from big, healthy babies to give to the weaker ones. "Of course, the same needles tended to be used on each occasion, spreading the virus."

Tara encountered Costel on her third visit to Dărmănești in March 1994. He was lying alone in his cot, weakened by dysentery and malnutrition.

"Because he looked so lost and tiny, I used to give him extra food and a cuddle. He'd pull away from most people but never did with me. He used to follow me with his eyes as I walked around, and crane his head forward as I left the room. I could tell that a bond was developing between us."

Returning home to Kent, Tara found herself unable to forget Costel, or the conditions in which he was living. She spoke to her husband, Roger, 32, about adopting the boy. Although they were recently married and able to have their own children, he agreed, visiting Dărmănești with his wife for the first time in August 1995. Roger says: "I wanted to do everything I could to help Tara. I saw how the problems in Romania were affecting her. Some people keep asking why we did it. But as soon as they meet Costel they understand. There is no way we could have left him alone."

Researching into Costel's background, Tara discovered that he was abandoned by his mother when just eight weeks old. She lived in a neighbouring village but had no wish to see her son. At 32, she already had more children than she could cope with.

"I went to see her to seek her permission to adopt Costel. She looked like an old woman. Her life had defeated her and any

suspiciousness of the Romanian people brought about by nearly half a century of state terror. The secret police, the Securitate, infiltrated every aspect of Romanian life: it was not uncommon for members of the same family to betray each other to the authorities. The failed attempt by a British couple, Adrian and Bernadette Mooney, to smuggle a Romanian child out of the country in August 1994 had created difficulties.

"The problems with the Mooneys made the Romanian authorities even more suspicious than they usually are," Tara says. "They did not believe our motives were pure. They could not understand why we wanted to take this child out of the country, especially when children were so cheaply regarded."

"They seemed to put so many obstacles in our way. There was so much red tape and paperwork. Costel was even moved to another orphanage in Ornești (a half-hour car journey from Dărmănești), which, though cleaner, was like a prison in terms of security; it took about three hours to get in the first time because they didn't know who we were."

Tara eventually arrived home with Costel on July 27 this year, more than two years after first finding him. She spent the previous two months living in a rented flat in Ornești. The uncertainty almost broke her, especially as she had only rudimentary Romanian. Money was an endless difficulty, too: the overall cost of the adoption was £12,000; the couple are still paying off a loan.

"I was staying in a small flat on my own and in the most abject conditions. I didn't know if I was going to be allowed to take Costel home with me or not. Then one afternoon when I went to see him I was told that I could 'take him away'. We lived together in the flat until the adoption papers came through."

Costel's adoption is official under Romanian law, but he is not yet a British citizen. "He must live in this country for 12 months before we can apply for British citizenship. God willing, that should be the final step we have to face."

She describes the feeling of being reunited with Roger and her parents, John and Pat Werner ("my greatest supporters"), at Heathrow as the best moment of her life. "Walking through customs with Costel I felt exhilarated, exhausted, vindicated... there has been nothing to compare in my life, not even walking down the aisle on my wedding day."

Under the close attention of his new parents, Costel has bloomed. In five months he has grown an inch, put on half a stone and begun eating solids for the first time. Where before he could neither speak nor walk, he can now do both. He has also shaken off the alopecia which left his hair thin and balding. His mother has just given him his first haircut, a thick wedge with a neat fringe.

To watch Costel as he plays in front of the Christmas tree, clearly enchanted by the colours and light, it is hard to imagine what he must have suffered. "He still has nightmares, but he is getting stronger each day," Tara says.

"We love him so much and pray that he can forget what happened to him and lead a normal, healthy life. My only regret, as we prepare for Christmas, is for the children we left behind."



Suffering: Costel in the Romanian orphanage

interest she might once have had in Costel had gone. She didn't seem to mind what happened to him. It was as if he had pushed him out of her mind; as if he didn't exist."

Costel's mother was a casualty of Nicolae Ceausescu's mission to create a population of fertile, capable women, bare foot and pregnant in the totalitarian kitchen.

He launched his repressive pro-natalist campaign in 1984, even though women constituted approximately half of the official labour force, being concentrated chiefly in the agricultural sector.

As a result, contraception was almost impossible to obtain, especially in the impoverished north, and abortion was illegal for any woman who had borne fewer than five children. Backstreet abortions were available but dangerous — medically and politically.

The adoption process was long and tortuous. It was not helped by the inherent

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The Times survival guide to last-minute Christmas

FOOD AND DRINK
This includes turkey, goose, champagne, cranberry sauce, puddings and Christmas lunch.

LONDON
Turkey: Marks & Spencer (7.30am-5pm); Asda (overnight until 6pm); Sainsbury (7.30am-5pm); Harrods (8am-5pm)
Goose: Asda, Safeway (overnight until 6pm)
Champagne: all major supermarkets
Cranberry sauce: all major supermarkets
Christmas pudding: all major supermarkets
Christmas lunch: Windows of the World, the rooftop restaurant at the London Hilton on Park Lane, still has spaces available for Christmas day. Lunch costs £112 for three-course lunch plus coffee; three-course dinner plus coffee costs £82. Details on 0171-493 8000; The Red Fort restaurant in Soho is offering a £50-a-head Indian feast for lunch or dinner on Christmas day. Details on 47 2115.

MANCHESTER
Turkey: Marks & Spencer (open 7am-5pm); Tesco (8am-6pm); Asda (7.30am-6pm); Safeway (7.30am-5pm)
Goose: Safeway (7.30am-6pm)
Champagne: M&S, Tesco, Asda, Safeway (opening times as above)
Cranberry sauce: M&S, Tesco, Asda, Safeway
Christmas pudding: M&S, Tesco, Asda, Safeway
Christmas lunch: Ramada £65 still available for small families

CARDIFF
Turkey: M&S, Queen St (7am-5pm); Sainsbury, Colchester Av. Roath (7.30am-6pm); Asda, Pontprennau (8am-5pm); Safeway, Llanishen (7.30am-5pm)
Goose: None
Champagne: M&S, Queen St; Sainsbury, Colchester Av. Roath; Asda, Pontprennau; Safeway, Llanishen (opening times as for turkey)
Cranberry sauce: M&S, Queen St; Asda, Pontprennau; Safeway, Llanishen
Christmas pudding: M&S, Queen St; Asda, Pontprennau; Safeway, Llanishen
Christmas lunch: all fully booked or closed

EXETER
Turkey: M&S (7am-5pm); Tesco (8am-6pm); Sainsbury (7.30am-6pm)
Goose: M&S; Tesco; Sainsbury
Champagne: M&S; Sainsbury; Tesco
Cranberry sauce: M&S; Tesco; Sainsbury
Christmas pudding: M&S; Tesco; Sainsbury
Christmas lunch: all fully booked or closed

BRISTOL
Turkey: M&S, Broadmead (7am-5pm); Tesco, Broadmead (8am-6pm); Sainsbury, Clifton Down (7.30am-6pm); Asda, Bedminster (7.30am-6pm); Safeway, Fishponds (7am-5pm)
Goose: Tesco, Broadmead (8am-6pm); Sainsbury, Clifton Down; Asda, Bedminster; Safeway, Fishponds
Champagne: all major supermarkets
Cranberry sauce: Tesco, Broadmead; Sainsbury, Clifton Down; Asda, Bedminster; Safeway, Fishponds
Christmas pudding: Tesco, Broadmead; Sainsbury, Clifton Down; Asda, Bedminster; Safeway, Fishponds
Christmas lunch: all well-known restaurants fully booked

ABERDEEN
Turkey: M&S (8.30-5pm); Presto, Union St (3.30am-6.30pm)
Goose: None
Champagne: M&S; Presto Union St



Don't panic: there's still plenty of opportunity to buy and stuff your turkey and have a glass of champagne with the family

Cranberry sauce: M&S; Presto Union St
Christmas pudding: M&S; Presto Union St
Christmas lunch: Stakis Treetops, a few places left (01224 313377)

(Buzz Lightyear sold out; Barbie, Trivial Pursuit, Risk, Monopoly and Pictionary)

LONDON
Toys and games: Hamleys, 188 Regent St. W1 (9am-6pm); Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1 (9am-5pm); Toys R Us, Brent Cross Shopping Centre, Tilling Rd, NW2 (7.30am-8pm)

MANCHESTER
Toys: Buzz Lightyear not available; Barbie at Toys R Us
Games: Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit and Risk, all at Kendals. Pictionary not available

CARDIFF
Toys: Barbie limited at Beatties, Castle St (9am-5pm) and Toys R Us (7.30am-8pm)
Games: Monopoly and Trivial Pursuit and Risk available at Toys R Us

EXETER
Toys: Pram and Toy Shop, Sidwell St (10am-5pm)
Games: Pram and Toy Shop, Trivial Pursuit and Risk sold out

BRISTOL
Toys and games: Toys R Us has Monopoly and Barbie, everything else sold out (7.30am-8pm)
ABERDEEN
Toys and games: Woolworths and Toys R Us. Trivial Pursuit and Pictionary sold out

CLOTHES
(Women and men's partywear and shoes)

LONDON
Women's partywear: Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, SW1 (10am-5pm); Laura Ashley, 256-258 Regent St. W1 (10am-3pm); Jigsaw, 31 Brompton

Rd, SW3 (10.30am-5pm, or longer depending on demand)
Men's partywear: Paul Smith, 41 Floral Street, WC2 (10.30am-5pm); Cecil Gee, 122 Bond Street, W1 (9.30am-3.30pm longer depending on demand); Jigsaw Menswear, 9 Floral Street, WC2 (10am-4pm)
Party shoes: Russell & Bromley, 109 New Bond St (10am-4pm); Emma Hope's Shoes, 33 Amwell St EC1 (10am-2pm); Charles Jourdan, 39 Brompton Road SW3 (10am-4.30pm)

MANCHESTER
Women's and men's partywear and shoes: Kendals (8.30am-5pm)

CARDIFF
Women's partywear: Howells (8.30am-5pm); Next (9am-5pm)
Men's partywear: Dinner jacket hire from Moss Bros (9am-5pm); Dunn & Co (9am-5.30pm)
Party shoes: Howells; Dunn & Co

EXETER
Women's partywear: La Bella Moda, Princesshay
Men's partywear: Peter Gardner; dinner jacket hire from Jonathan Hawkes, Harlequin Centre
Party shoes: Elizabeth Ann, Cathedral Close

BRISTOL
Women's and men's partywear and party shoes: very little available

ABERDEEN
Women's and men's partywear and party shoes: shops in Bon Accord shopping centre (9am-5.30pm); all hiring shops closed unless you have an appointment

TRAVEL

(Holidays and car hire)

LONDON
Holidays: British Airways has availability on many flights departing on Christmas Day, although these may be in Club or Upper Class. Destinations include New York, San Francisco, Tokyo, Johannesburg, Barbados and Jamaica. Details on 0345 222111 (24 hrs); Virgin Atlantic still has seats available on Christmas Day flights to Florida and Hong Kong. Details on 01293 747747 (6.45am-10pm today, 9am-2pm Christmas Day); Car hire: Eurodollar has limited availability from Heathrow. Details on 0181-897 4322 (24 hrs); However, Luton airport is a possible late option if that fails.

MANCHESTER
Holidays: Thomas Cook holidays to Tenerife available and limited Christmas Eve flights. Car hire: Budget, Avis and Euro-car

CARDIFF
Holidays: none available
Car hire: all cars already booked

EXETER
Holidays: A T Mays, South Street, only holiday available self-catering in Tenerife or Mexico, flights from Manchester
Car hire: Avis and Euro-car, plenty of choice; Budget, low availability

BRISTOL
Holidays: All major travel agents closed
Car hire: Hertz, good choice (8.30am-4pm)

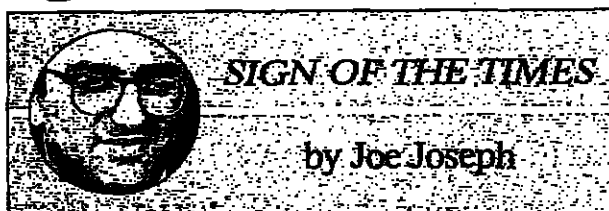
ABERDEEN
Holidays and cars: nothing available

Wise men and the art of buying Christmas gifts

As another December 25 tiptoes towards us, we once again find ourselves lost in deep spiritual thought about the many mysteries of Christmas, particularly why women make such a big song and dance about buying presents.

Knowing how much women enjoy browsing in Bond Street we men even let them buy presents for our side of the family. And you know what? They still moan. What's more, we selfishly beguile this fun activity even though we know in our heart of hearts that women aren't all that brilliant at buying really interesting, unusual presents for their relatives and friends. Partly this is because when it comes to the annual ritual of Christmas presents, many women take off from a very long runway: they start thinking about Christmas presents (and begin drawing up shopping lists) in August, which robs them of the inventiveness that comes with the adrenalin rush of chasing a deadline.

When I mention this failing to some women, they ask "What on earth are you talking about?" in what is clearly a genuine tone of inquiry and search for guidance. So I explain a woman thinks of Aunt Marjorie and remembers that she enjoys needlepoint, wears Guerlain scent and buys her jumpers at Marks & Spencer, so this woman, thinking "logically", buys her some embroidery thread, or a Guerlain eau de Cologne, or an M&S jumper. Men leave it to Christmas Eve, in order to ensure that they allow their adrenalin-fired imagination no lazy



SIGN OF THE TIMES

by Joe Joseph

slack, and then they conclude: "Why pigeonhole Aunt Marjorie? Maybe she asches to try a new hobby if only people would stop buying her embroidery thread; or maybe a squirt of Estee Lauder or a Prada jumper?" Then we make it our Christmas mission to inject a little novelty into Aunt Marjorie's life by buying her a small tub of yacht-deck matt varnish, which happens to be available from the ship chandlery next to the office on the way to St Katharine's Dock.

Having spawned and then clinically executed this brainwave, many men naturally return home with Aunt Marjorie's trophy expecting at least a small thank-you from the woman of the house. Instead they are met with the blinkered phrase: "What on earth is your Aunt Marjorie - who wouldn't know a yacht from a yashmak - going to do with a tub of varnish? And what happened to the other seven presents you agreed to buy?"

It is at such moments that men don't even bother trying to explain the difference between quality and quantity: women wouldn't understand. This is why many wise men,

as the years pass, have learnt to bite their lip and leave all the Christmas present-buying to women, who possess such butterfly-hopping brains that they are quite capable of thinking simultaneously of 11 different presents that they have to buy - and actually buying them - before picking up a few groceries on the way home. Sometimes, of course, women realise that they have bitten off more than they can chew, at which point they will go to extraordinary lengths to hand back the present-buying responsibility to men - even if it means getting hugely pregnant, which they say makes it tricky to manoeuvre around Harrods (but not if you are thoughtful enough to hire them a wheelchair).

Men - not allowed to shop, but nevertheless being responsible adults - naturally shoulder some of the other duties in order to share the burdens of the Christmas season. They will, for example, telephone the butcher to order the turkey and even leave the butcher their wife's telephone number so he can call her back later and finalise details of what kind, and size,

of turkey the family wants this year.

Men will also, selflessly, spend hours in Oddbins and Majestic worrying themselves stupid about which wines to buy, and about how many cases of Pilsner will be required to see the wife and children through the Boxing Day sporting fixtures on telly. Another thing: men will - without even being asked - offer judgment on whether or not the trimming of the Christmas tree is an improvement over last year's trendy Mexican red chillies theme.

Men are also sensitive enough to realise that a woman's nerves can jangle at this time of year. They know that sometimes it takes a very small straw to break the camel's back, such as when she asks you if you have bought the present for your nephew Jamie, as agreed.

Considerate as ever, and reluctant to push her over the edge, you naturally don't tell her baldly that you haven't bought it yet because she will only say something she'll regret, such as "But it's Christmas Eve, you wombat, and the shops are all closed now!"

So, keeping your own counsel, you just tiptoe to the Christmas tree (Ah! Spirals of dried orange peel! Much better than last year's, dear) and pick a present that some friends dropped round at the weekend for your son, but which he hasn't yet spotted, then rip off the tag and write "For Jamie" on it. Why? Because new men are ecologically minded and believe in recycling in all corners of our lives. Sensitive or what?

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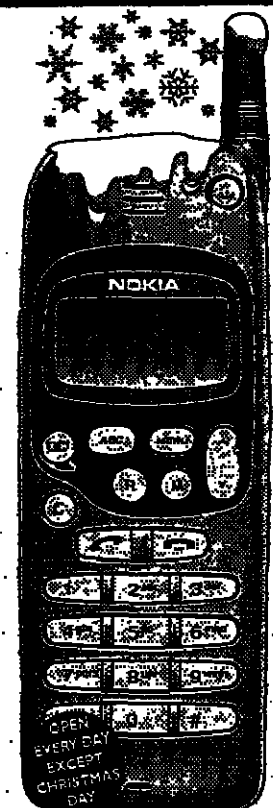
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■ VISUAL ART

Image of the year: Bill Viola's *The Messenger* in Durham Cathedral will long haunt the imagination



■ RADIO

Edwina Currie plays the title-role as politicians ham their way through *Iolanthe*

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ MUSIC

Hallelujah! Handel's *Messiah* still pulls in the crowds on its Christmas appearances



■ BOXING DAY

Anthony Hopkins in *Surviving Picasso*, and all the other new films, reviewed by Geoff Brown

“REMARKABLE...”

Hopkins brings tremendous power to the role.”

— Sheridan Morley, BBC RADIO 2

“A magnificent moving experience... totally mesmerising.”

— Charlotte Moore, ELLE

“DAZZLING, DARING, VIGOROUSLY INVENTIVE.”

— N.Y. TIMES

ANTHONY
HOPKINS

Surviving
PICASSO

15



Message of hope

For Richard Cork, Bill Viola's superb artwork in Durham Cathedral was a highlight of 1996

When medieval art was at its height in Britain, churches and cathedrals were the natural home for the finest painting and sculpture of the period. The smashing and burning perpetrated by Henry VIII and his Protestant successors ensured that pitifully little now remains. We are forced to search for vandalised fragments in the shadows of nave, transepts and choir. They provide only a bruised and abraded hint of the images that once played such an integral part in the architecture they enhanced. And attempts by 20th-century clergy to commission new religious art have ended, all too often, in excruciating banality.

The *Messenger*, Bill Viola's video installation in Durham Cathedral, stays in my mind as one of the most heartening works I encountered in 1996. Initiated by the cathedral's senior chaplain, Bill Hall, as part of the celebrations of the UK Year of the Visual Arts, it proved against the odds that contemporary art in a hallowed setting can vie with the intensity of its medieval forerunners.

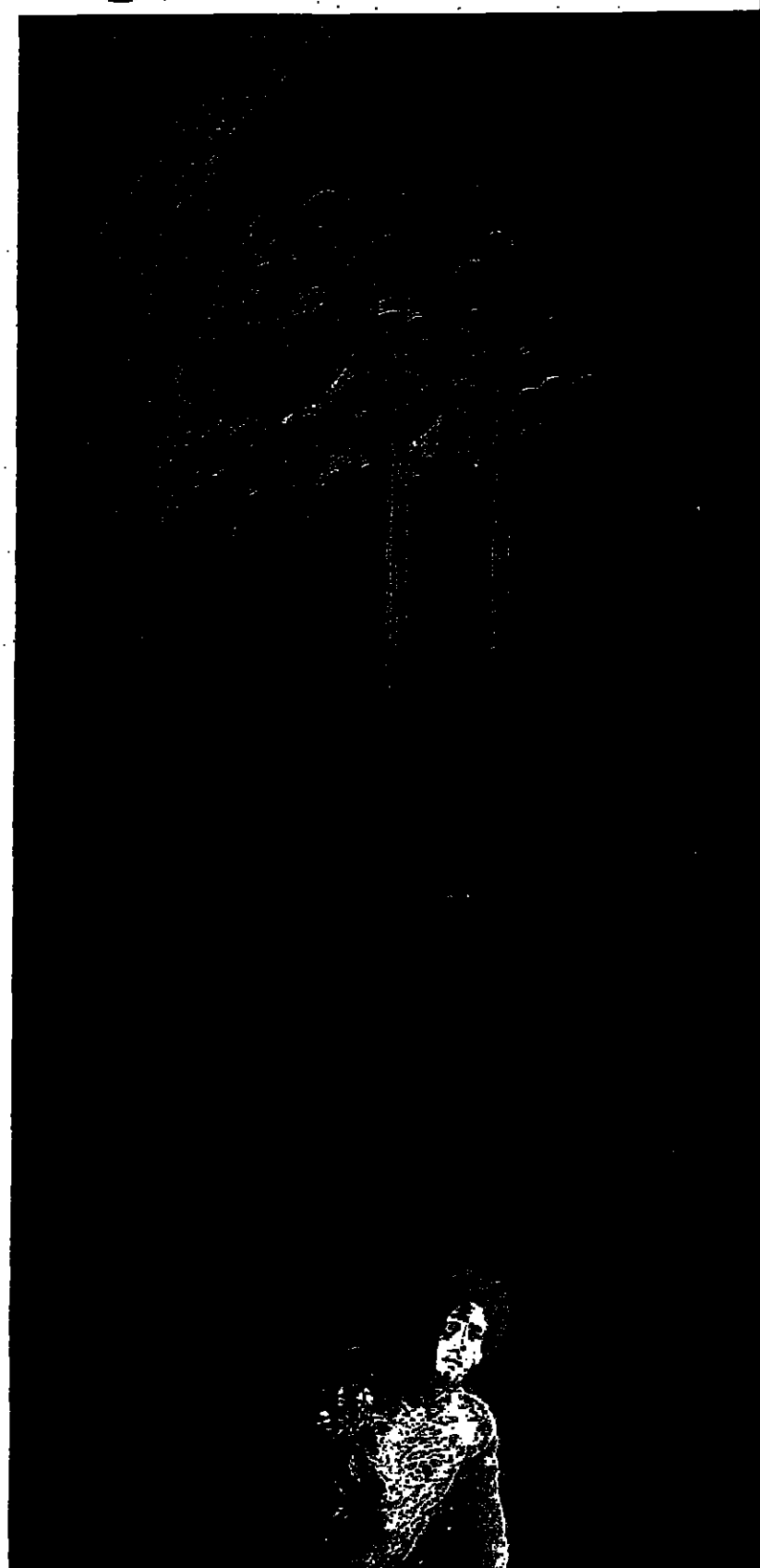
Few of the images which once embellished this sublime building now survive. The great Neville Screen in Caen stone behind the High Altar, given by Lord Neville around 1380, was originally enlivened by 107 richly gilded and painted statues. Only a few of its smallest and most incidental carvings have been spared, and the profusion of empty niches is painful to contemplate. Moreover, at the centre of this same chapel an elaborate embroidered frontal on the altar exemplifies everything wrong with church embellishment today. Designed by Leonard Childs and funded by the Friends of the Cathedral in 1994, it looks garish and unworthy of this austere setting.

Not so Viola's installation, which focuses unapologetically on the full-length figure of a naked man. Viola's decision to dispense with the statutory loin-cloth prompted the Dean to consult the police. But pornography plays no part in the image of a pale, submerged body projected on to the large screen. Positioned below a fine stained-glass window at the cathedral's riverside end, and framed by an arch, the screen was attached to the Great West Door. The utter simplicity of Viola's image chimed with the monumental severity of its Romanesque surroundings.

When the work commences, it does not strain for grandiose effect. The figure is scarcely discernible at first. He seems little more than a small, wavering blur illuminated by a diagonal shaft of ice-blue light streaming in from the right. Gradually, we realise that the blue-black emptiness around him is water.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, this inert and anonymous man becomes more identifiable as he rises upwards. Bubbles gush from his head like stars spinning out of control in the night sky. He looks more dead than alive, and submits limply to the force of the water. Then, quite suddenly, he breaks through. As his body hits the air and the warmth of a brighter light, the man's gasping relief appears to be mixed with a rush of pleasure. The colour washing over one side of his body is as heady as the brilliant drapery in a Mannerist altarpiece by Pontorno, a painter whom Viola particularly admires. Memories are stirred of the dead Christ in a thousand Deposition scenes.

Although video is Viola's medium, he



Modern art complements the medieval in a hallowed setting: a scene from *The Messenger*, Bill Viola's video installation in Durham Cathedral

remains profoundly indebted to the European tradition of figure painting. But he does not seek to impose a religious meaning on *The Messenger*. The floating form is impossible to identify with confidence as Christ, even when we watch his bearded face release a long-held breath. The sound of pent-up air rushing from his mouth echoes through the cathedral. And for a moment, *The Messenger* seems to be unequivocally concerned with the promise of rebirth.

But rather than moving towards a Lazarus-like emergence from the void, the figure finally inhales as deeply as possible, closes his eyes and sinks back into the darkness. The smaller he becomes, the more he sheds his human identity, breaking up into slivers of glacial light.

The cycle begins again, and is repeated without losing any of its trance-like power. When *The Messenger* eventually ends, we find ourselves watching the screen grow completely dark. The dim-

utive form, now impossible to recognise, is snuffed out. So instead of encouraging us to have faith in a Resurrection, Viola's mesmerising work emphasises the inevitability of physical obliteration.

In this respect, the Durham installation confirms the involvement with mortality in many of Viola's earlier video pieces. *The Messenger* does not seem at all morbid. Its prevailing quality lies in an extraordinary sense of graceful lyricism. Perhaps the figure is spiritually buoyed up by the knowledge that a cyclical rhythm controls his fate, enabling him to ebb and flow like a tide. Above all, it enables us to take heart from the climactic moment when his mouth sends out an affirmation of life, demonstrating beyond all doubt that contemporary art can still play a potent and illuminating role in the most awesome of ecclesiastical interiors.

● *The Messenger* has now been acquired by the Guggenheim Museum in New York and goes on show there from Jan 18 to March 23

The old made new

MUSIC

The Sixteen/
Christophers
St John's
Smith Square

and some few for whom it was the first. How, then, to make the old new once again without recourse to mere novelty? And how to avoid the clichés of both post-imperial and Post-Modern, period-instrument Handel without mannerism and the arch? These were the challenges met by Christophers in a performance of dramatic intensity.

The orchestra played with the sensuous austerity for which it is famed: chorals and rhythmic figures incisive, yet

melled into a single humming line in, for instance, its accompaniment to the tenor aria *Comfort ye*. The Sixteen themselves — all 18 of them on this occasion — had thought through every choral line. The natural inflection of the biblical words as set by Handel would frequently be newly-lit by, for instance, the momentary expansion, rather than mere emphasis, of the first syllable of “Wonderful” in *For unto us a Child is born*. And the snarling inner parts of the

taunting chorus, *He trusted in God* intensified the drama within a drama which is *Messiah*'s darkest hour.

The tenor Mark Padmore brought real urgency to his recitatives. Michael Georgi created seismic movement high up on the Richter scale in his shaking of the heaven and the earth. Michael Chance's counter-tenor leapt high and pure with the refiner's fire and Lynda Russell showed there was no need to turn *Rejoice greatly* into a jig to make it lively.

This was a remarkable performance by any standards, but particularly from a band of musicians who had been touring for seven gruelling nights before Christmas.

HILARY FINCH

THE radio year has only six days left to come up with anything more entertaining than *Food and Familiar* (Radio 4, 2pm, tomorrow). Tailor-made for Christmas, yet not a mention of Christmas in it, it is a pot-pourri of verse, epigrams and ballads. Outrageously funny one moment, poignant the next.

The selection was made by John Moffat. He, Judi Dench, Michael Williams and the implacably pianistic Michael Haslam make up

CHRISTMAS-DAY RADIO PREVIEW

the performing quartet. The interplay between them is kept to a minimum so that we can enjoy the jewels of the collection without distraction. The keynote of producer Enyd Williams's show is struck by the line “The cares that infest the day shall fold their tents like Arabs, and as silently, steal away.”

Gilbert and Sullivan kept MPs out of their fairy opera

Iolanthe. No such proscription mars Classic FM's extraordinary production of it (Classic FM, 2pm, tomorrow). Edwina Currie (title role), Teresa Gorman, Clare Short, Diane Abbot, Tony Banks, Jerry Hayes all have roles. The House of Lords is stoutly represented by Lord Healey (as Lord Chancellor), Lord Howe of Aberavon (Earl of Mountarara), and

Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare (Earl Tolloller). It is either good news or bad that none of them sings. They speak their parts, while the professionals do all the warbling.

When *Iolanthe* opened in 1882, *The Times* sniftily said of it: “Healthy, albeit not supremely intellectual.” In 1996, it's as healthy as ever. Intellectualism can go and take a running jump.

PETER DAVALE

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Alan Coren



Yesterday, I asked the Editor what he wanted for Christmas. I hoped he would say slippers. He did not. He said he wanted a short history of Christmas. It serves me right for asking.

274 The Emperor Aurelian chooses 25 December as the birthday of the unconquered sun (*natalis solis invicti*). To celebrate the event, his wife buys him a pair of gloves (*tegumenta*). They do not fit (*inutilis*). 336 With the arrival of Christianity in Rome, the Church establishes the birth of Christ on the same date. To celebrate this, the Emperor Constantine asks his wife for a set of ring-spanners. He gets gloves.

541 Christmas celebrated in Jerusalem for the first time. Most theologians agree that the reason for the delay was that it took two centuries for the concept of gloves to spread eastwards.

583 First appearance of holly as a Christmas decoration — adapted from a pagan regeneration rite marking the time of year when things began to look up for greenrocks.

731 Christmas arrives in England, prompting the Venerable Bede to write his first book, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, translated into the vernacular as *Better Than Gloves*. He dies in Jarrow, but his remains are moved to Durham on Christmas Day 1031 to coincide with the reissue of the paperback. Musical adaptation goes to Number One.

881 Hiding from the Danes in Athelney, King Alfred is forced to spend Christmas with an old couple, who give him gloves. In retaliation, he pours brandy over their cake and ignites it. Staunchly loyal, however, they applaud when he brings it in. Moved, he becomes a good king.

1191 Sensing the marketing possibilities of laying copyright claim to Nazareth, the Third Crusade embarks for the Holy Land to secure the Christmas card franchise. The Turks and Syrians resist fiercely, since they control the fig, date, and mince-meat trade, and fear it will be ruined if housewives spend all their money on rhyming correspondence.

1192 Returning to England, King Richard's troops find their wives being kissed in the hall by strange men. The wives explain that this is a new magical method of freeing hammerbeams from mistletoe infestation.

1193 Richard and his army embark for France. The fighting continues for some years. Returning to England, his men discover that they have several new children. The wives explain that, every Christmas, a man climbs down the chimney.

1588 Armada sunk. British sherry introduced.

1589 293 separate salvage attempts on Spanish wrecks.

1590 Potatoes and cigars introduced to Elizabeth's court at Christmas lunch by Sir Walter Raleigh. They are not a success: the Queen is unable to light her cigarette, and the Earl of Essex surreptitiously gives his boiled panettas to the cat.

1603 Accession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England heralds the advent of the tartan slipper.

1662 Several Plymouth pilgrims return from New World with turkeys, for Christmas with relatives. First hot roast turkey eaten.

1663 Last cold roast turkey eaten.

1664 Last turkey risotto polished off.

1665 Great Plague.

1689 William of Orange accedes, introducing many interesting Dutch fashions. At Christmas, 2,867 people die of advocat.

1733 John Kay invents flying shuttle, revolutionising textile industry. At Christmas, loved ones excitedly exchange a million dressing gowns. After Christmas, they are exchanged again, this time for credit notes.

John Kay put in stocks by shopkeepers and pelted with unsold gloves, tartan slippers and bottles of advocat.

1785 Edmund Cartwright invents power loom. First mass-produced beige cardigans begin appearing in dustbins.

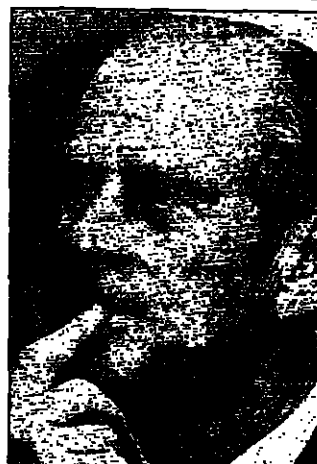
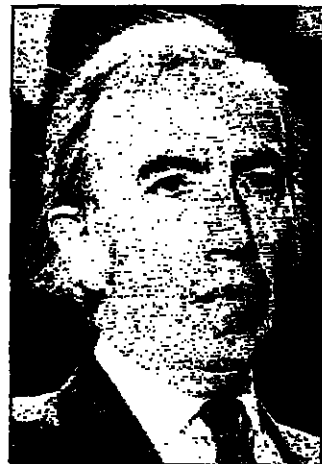
1914 Christmas Day soccer fixture between England and Germany degenerates into unprecedented scenes of violence. Rival supporters fight it out for four years.

Germany subsequently demands replay.

1923 John Logie Baird — having spent Christmas dragging his in-laws off one another, watching his kids screaming over busted train-sets, trying to remove advocat from all the dressing-gowns he has to take back, and suffering from nine assorted dysfunctions of liver, brain and gut, plus carving thumb strain up by drunken locom — pledges himself to inventing a better way of passing the festive season. Tragically, he manages only to come up with the worst way of all.

The danger from homicidal maniacs does not begin with their weapons, says Woodrow Wyatt

Why violent videos do more harm than guns



Lord St John and the Duke: who has the right to speak?

Firearms (Amendment) Bill that is now going through the Lords would be so sensational an intervention in party politics that it would inevitably, in the public mind, impugn the Queen's political status.

Prince Philip is an expert on the care and handling of guns, not merely from his naval service in the war, but from his prolific use of them in peacetime when shooting game. Defending him on the TV programme, I said we were lucky to have the opinion of so great an expert, and I agreed with him that the new gun laws would not save a single life.

As we all do, the Duke grieves for the lost children of Dunblane, but laws enacted in response to emotional impulse are unsound, particularly, in my view, when the political parties cynically vie with each other in milking the emotions for political advantage.

In August 1987 Michael Ryan murdered people wantonly in Hungerford. Unlicensed lethal weapons were found among his possessions. Anyone intent on mass murder can easily obtain illegal weapons, which are flooding in from Russia via Germany,

Ireland and elsewhere. (Strangely enough, the new gun laws will not apply in Northern Ireland.) The headmaster Philip Lawrence was murdered with a knife. In the Tokyo underground, hundreds of passengers were subjected to poison gas. In Tasmania, Martin Bryant committed multiple slaughter. We live in times when some deranged people consider violence to be normal.

This lunacy is fanned non-stop by the BBC, commercial television and videos. The top ten rental videos have an average of 13 gun-killings and six killings by other means. Crazy — Martin Bryant had a vast collection of such videos. These insidious films, imitated by those on the verge of insanity, should be banned by law — not handguns owned by the law-abiding who

pass the required firing tests.

On the television programme, to the surprise of Mr Greenslade, callers rang to say "Lord Wyatt is right". Mr Greenslade handsomely conceded that the mood appears to be changing. It is.

The Snowdrop campaigners of Dunblane have gone too far in blackmailing our emotions. The analogy used by the Duke, of killing with a cricket bat, though perfectly possible, was light-hearted. It was regarded by the Snowdrop campaigners as joking about a taboo subject, as though the inanimate weapon were the culprit, not the evil mind behind it. Even if it were possible to ban all weapons it would not be desirable.

Last August the *New York Post* carried a remarkable article by Dr Irwin Stelzer in which he quoted from official statistics. Serious crimes in New York — murder, burglary, robbery, sex crimes and auto-thefts — were down by almost 12 per cent in the first six months of this year compared with the first half of 1995. This though the city is thick with illegal weapons.

Looking further afield, wide-

spread academic research has shown that almost half the burglaries in Britain, where there are already strict gun-control laws, are so-called "hot burglaries". The criminal strikes when residents are at home. In America, however, the burglars worry lest the householder has a gun. Some 56 per cent of the felony prisoners in ten state jails said they would not attack a potential victim known to be armed or who might be armed. Consequently, the "hot burglary" rate in America is only 13 per cent.

If rapists and bag-smashers thought that women might be carrying handguns, they would be afraid to attack. In the United States, it is estimated that if those states which have adopted provisions allowing people to carry concealed guns had adopted them earlier, approximately 1,570 murders, 4,177 rapes and more than 60,000 aggravated assaults would have been avoided annually.

Contrary to the prevailing illusion that fewer guns mean less crime, it appears that the more law-abiding men and women there are who know how to handle guns and are allowed to carry them, the less crime there is. As so often, we appear to be going in the direction opposite to that which we intend.

Meanwhile, congratulations to the Duke of Edinburgh for bluntly stating the obvious — a practice which in this country is generally regarded as eccentric.

Rewards of a thankless task

People who work at Christmas are truly entering into the holiday spirit

You probably expect me, as a notorious mother and public waffer about child rearing, to devote this Christmas Eve space to something heart-bound and familial. Cue stockings and Santa, stuffing-balls and in-laws, frosty walks and country churches, cribs and carols and sugary domestic contentment.

A fair enough presumption: useless to deny that I have trodden that path, kept the peace and worn the paper hat for enough years to win my Grade 7 Festive Motherhood Medal and Order of the Mince Pie (2nd class).

However, I have to tell you that every year at this time a curious wistful sense comes to me of something missing. And although I am exactly where I ought to be for the moment, yet still a small treacherous part of me wonders whether it will ever again know the queer, lonely but strangely satisfying feeling of working on Christmas Day.

Hundreds do. Nurses and doctors and sailors at sea, firefighters and police, broadcasters, weather forecasters, soldiers, security guards, low-paid assistants in old people's homes and high-paid Anthea Turner on *HMS Belfast*; hotel staff, power stations and Directory Inquiries, AA and RAC, coastguards and emergency gas fitters. We may think of Britain tomorrow as slumped companionably watching the Queen (or Rory Bremner) with bits of Party Popper in its hair, but that is not the whole story. There will also be men and women in half-deserted offices and cold Portakabins, walking through hushed wards, milking cows, checking instruments, pushing the button to start the videotape of Christmas TV specials recorded in October, and sitting in the strangely sad landscape of deserted newspaper offices dropping mince-pie crumbs in the keyboard as they morosely tap in stories of Christmas babies and foreign disasters.

Those who work on Christmas Day are a small, strange, proud tribe. By convention everybody says to them: "Oh hard luck, poor you, but think of the overtime, and you'll get next year off." The workers rarely contradict them. It would not be seemly. They may meekly point out that Christmas priority goes to those with small children, but prefer not to admit to uninitiated that working on Christmas Day, in most of the jobs that

require it, has inimitable satisfactions of its own. Even less would they admit that these satisfactions connect in an inarticulate way with the concept of goodwill to all men, and that it can feel more Christmassy, not less, to be at work.

I blame Scrooge. Hunched in his counting-house, begrudging Bob Cratchit a few hours off, the old curmudgeon gave Christmas Day working a bad name. Deep in Dickens's fable is the suggestion that sitting down to a family dinner is not only pleasant but morally superior. No doubt there were plenty of night-soil collectors and lamplighters grafting away in the background when Scrooge ran out shouting his conversion to the concept of a Merry Christmas, but they are out of sight. Christmas equals goodwill, goodwill equals a family table, and anybody

admitting they like being at work on the 25th of December is tainted with bah-humbugism. I loved it, in young adulthood, at least, work was where I best belonged: in future years, in that lull before the onset of grandchildren, it may well draw me back. As Giles Coren perceptively (and rather bravely) pointed out last week in these pages, there is a curious and unsettling phase when family Christmases consist of parents in their fifties with children in their twenties, all staring at a turkey and wishing to God that there was someone around who wanted Lego or a fairy outfit. I was lucky: at that period I worked in local radio and could volunteer to go in before Christmas dawn, send pulse-tone to the transmitter, plug up the studio, pull open a fader or the 0600 time signal, play in a tape carillon and all alone wish Oxfordshire a happy Christmas.

I went on from there into phone-ins, real conversations with real strangers who were for one reason or another sufficiently alone on Christmas morning to find solace in joshing with a local radio presenter. Sometimes it involved nipping down to the Radcliffe Infirmary children's ward to confront pale children with Johnnie Chucks the clown. Sometimes the shift stretched on into the melancholy Christmas evening, so that the station could say goodnight properly and show that it still cared. A duty newspaper would be in for a while, but for much of the day I would be alone



Grace Darling and her father: service in the bleak midwinter

with Christmas, with calls in from listeners (often themselves at work) and calls out to the emergency services and the weather centre. Down the tiny lines we all gigged with the camaraderie of working on Christmas Day. Sometimes if my shift ended early I went down to the Cyrenean shelter and washed dishes for assorted tramps and lost, drunk Irish lads who had fallen through the bottom of the building trade. I loved it all. Goodwill to all men? Oh, it's out there all right.

This all came back when I read that for the last time this year, there is a rock off our coastline with not only a lighthouse on it but two resident lighthousekeepers. At the weekend in Scotland, Mearns Forge and Kenny Weir were

gently regretting that Hyskeir, their lighthouse off the West Highland coast, will be uninhabited by March. This is the last time we may drink at cosy Christmas tables to men on lonely rocks who keep lights burning for seafarers.

Their strange, lonely, vital profession has run its historical course: the last English lighthouses were automated a couple of years ago, and now the last of the northern lights follows. It has been a good trade as Mr Forge put it, "a life of orderly self-reliance", watching the sea and tending the light. At times — as when Keeper William Darling and his daughter Grace rowed out from the Farnie to the stricken ship *Porfarskire* — it included the even higher duty of rescue.

The isolation and dutifulness of these men goes strangely well with Christmas. Yachtsmen used to sail out on Boxing Day to deliver parcels to the Needles Lighthouse, old-fashioned households felt no Christmas complete without a recitation of W.W. Gibson's poem about the disappearance of the Flannan Islands keepers:

Though three men dwell on Flannan Isle
To keep the lamp alight
As we steer'd under the lee, we caught
No glimmer through the night.

It was all true; the Flannan keepers were indeed lost, in 1900. On Boxing Day of that year the master of the investigating ship, the *Hesperus*, telegraphed: "The clocks were stopped and other signs indicated that the accident must have happened about a week ago. Poor fellows, they must have been blown over the cliffs or drowned trying to secure a crane or something like that."

He continued, practically: "I have left Moore, Macdonald, buoy-master and two seamen on the island to keep the light burning." So that was their Christmas too: on duty alone in the cold and the wind and spray, unnerved by the mystery they had found, keeping a public service going.

I suppose that if you were forced to work in a hawthick international bank on Christmas Day, or were an underpaid maid waiting on an unpleasant household, you might rightly resent it. Even for essential and honourable service professionals, missing the sight of your own children opening their stockings must be cause for a certain gloom. But otherwise Christmas working can be wonderful. If goodwill to all men is the point, then to be the boy with your finger in the dike, the lone watchkeeper, the guard at society's gate protecting the innocent revellers from harm, or — even better — the volunteer slaving over tea-urns at a Crisis lunch for the homeless — is not a burden but an honour.

To some, anyway; and I suspect they are often the ones who volunteer and so end up doing it. To come back to the lighthousemen again, the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses laid down in the early part of the century their requirements for employees on rock stations:

Not every man is suitable to be a light-keeper. The good lightkeeper has or acquires the temperament so necessary for this job, which has much loneliness and isolation in its composition — a lightkeeper will not make a fortune, but the odds are he will be at peace with himself and with the world.

Yes, that's it exactly. To anybody working tomorrow, happy Christmas and thank you.

Widow piqued

Widow Twankey will not be appearing on the Test tour of Zimbabwe this Christmas. The traditional pantomime staged by the press for England's cricketers has been cancelled because the players, stung by relentless crit-

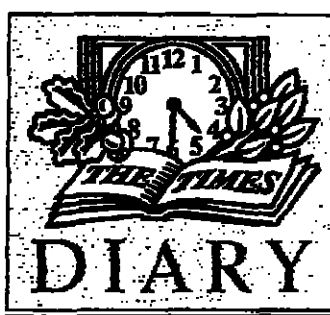
cism of their performances, refuse to attend.

"In the late 1980s, the press pantomimes were very popular and everybody thought it was very funny," said one Test tour regular. "This year, however, the England management declined. They complained that the press coverage had been virulent and personal."

Even the appearance in southern Africa of Ian Botham, no stranger to ridiculous pantomime performances, has not shaken the management's resolve. From a high point in the late 1980s, relations between players and the press have sunk lower and lower.

"Part of the problem is that the players have not been coming out drinking," explained a journalist. "They retire to their hotel, where they have become obsessed with a word game called Balderdash. They play it as if there wasn't any other game."

Can Diana, Princess of Wales, be planning to hoof it to Australia for her post-Christmas hole? I understand that two VIP tickets for Sydney have been



booked through Heathrow under the name of *Mendham*. The Princess's constant holiday companion is one Victoria Mendham.

Mug's games

NO SLOUCHES, the bobbies in Stoke Newington. When reports filtered through of a gang that was robbing Orthodox Jews as they left banks in the north London neighbourhood, operation "Hill Street Jews" was put into action.

After seeking sartorial advice from a rabbi, an officer donned the long coat, waistcoat and hat sported by Hasidic Jews and hung about furtively outside a bank. It didn't matter that the decoy had failed to remember the traditional ringlets and beard of the Orthodox

Jew, the muggers weren't picky: they rushed up to him, mobbed him and were promptly arrested.

Riotous though the event was, Mike Moore wasn't the snapper who let fly at the Daily Mirror photographers' party, crunching a chap's nose. I apologise for suggesting that it was his right hook that caused the damage.

Soft sell

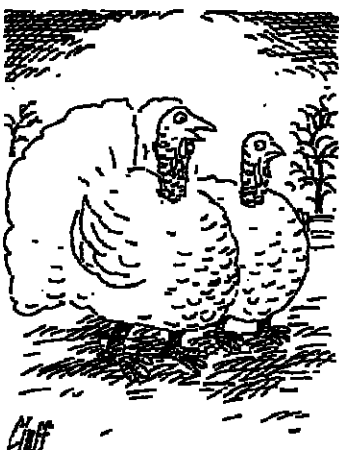
NEWT GINGRICH, the fiery orator and House of Representatives Speaker, seems to have mellowed. Senators and congressmen have been falling over themselves to be nice to each other since opinion polls showed that the American public do not want their politicians to fight and bicker any more. Mr Gingrich's bickery rhetoric has been replaced by words of loving understanding, typified by one much-used phrase, "the fallibility of man".

Some are suggesting that Mr Gingrich's change in tone had more to do with the investigation this week by the Congressional Ethics Committee into allegations concerning his past behaviour as Speaker, to which he admitted two days ago, "I don't fall for it." says a

senior Capitol Hill employee. "I've heard that fallibility of man stuff too often recently and it's just not like him."

Malt-easer

EVER the local squire, the Prince of Wales yesterday pitched up at his local pub to weigh in on a discussion about a local planning concern: whether the disused railway



"I was bound to get off on appeal once Michael Howard bought me."

yard in Tetbury should be turned into a country park.

Over a tumbler of malt at the Royal Oak, the Prince appeared to support the scheme. The landlady's verdict: "A very nice young man who seemed to like his whisky."

China crisis

A COLOURFUL, beautifully designed calendar plate was intended to be one of the seasonal highlights produced by Spode.

A batch of 1,200 was produced and passed the rigorous checks that fine bone china undergoes. The glaze was perfect, the pattern positioned correctly and the colours superb. It was left to a packer at the pottery's Stoke factory to spot the flaw: the plate showed that 1997 was going to have only 364 days. December 31 did not exist.

Deliveries were cancelled but the picturesque plates were not destroyed. They were given to the Spode staff as an extra Christmas bonus.

Expect double portions of brandy butter at the Ayrshire home of Kirsty Hume, an up-and-coming supermodel. Her boyfriend Donovan Leitch, son of the 1960s crooner Donovan, is reportedly planning



Model Kirsty: proposal?

to propose to her under the mistletoe after a brief courtship (the couple met at a nightclub in May). Donovan has already bought the ring, and I suggest that he contrives to pop it, wrapped in foil, into her portion of Christmas pud.

P.H.S



Ian Botham: pantomime king

**VICE-ADMIRAL SIR
HUGH THOMPSON**

1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl *a*)

Brampton United make their capital out of Dublin



WHEN PICKING Brampton United, Mr D Churcher must have been looking for some versatility from his selections. However, even he cannot have expected one of his strikers, Dion Dublin, of Coventry City, to be drafted in as a central defender.

Still, he is probably not arguing as Coventry beat both Newcastle United and Leicester City to record their first victories in the FA Carling Premiership since September, and Dublin's two goals against Leicester helped to make Brampton United the winner of the £250 weekly prize in *The Times* Interactive Team Football game.

Mr Churcher's team is:

Goalkeeper
N Southall (Everton)

Full backs
A Hinchcliffe (Everton)
D Irwin (Man United)

Central defenders
G Hunter (Hibernian)
S Vickers (Middlesbrough)

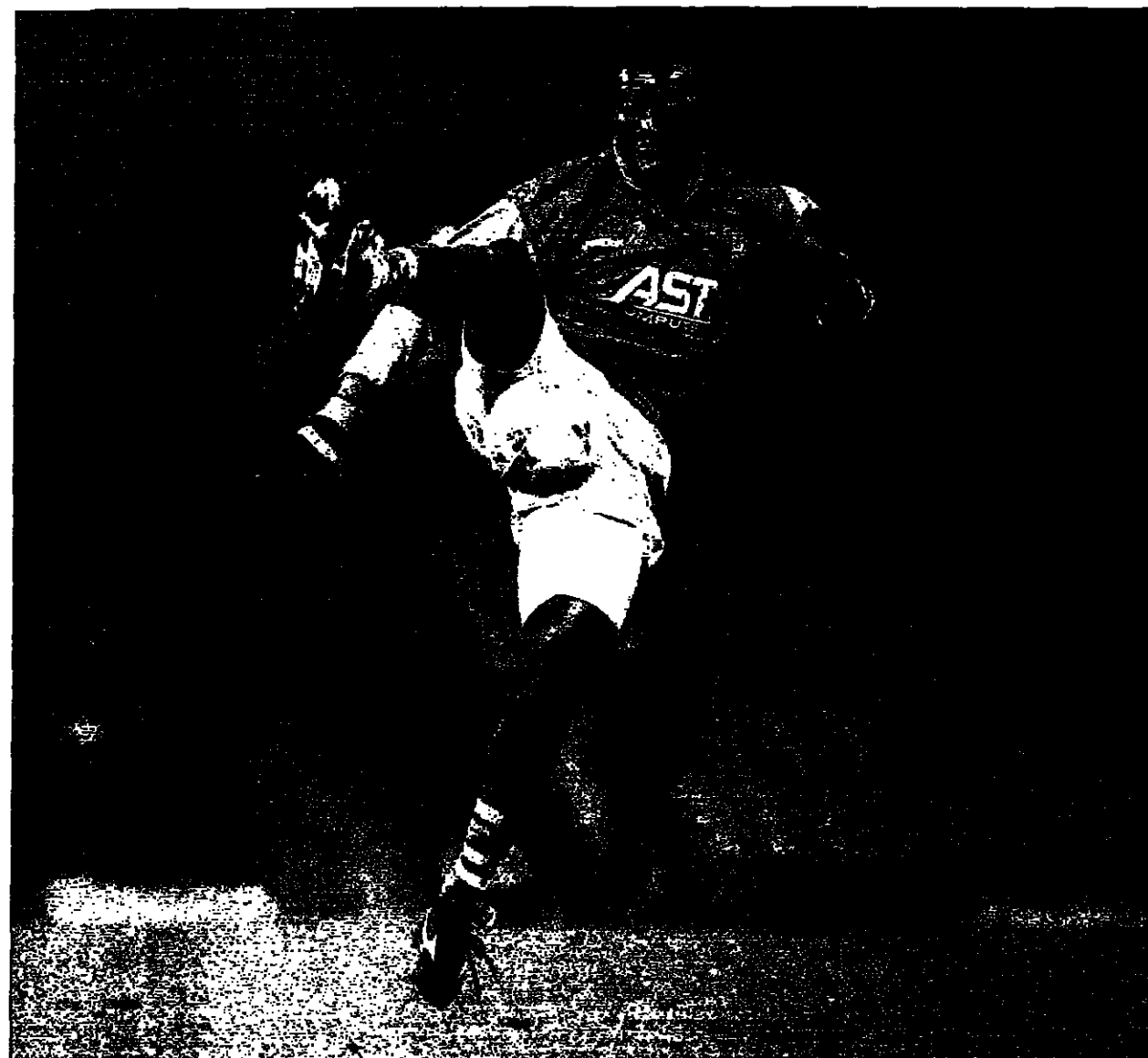
Midfield players
P McGinlay (Hibernian)
L Bowyer (Leeds)
R Bunker (Sheff Wed)
J Magilton (Southampton)

Strikers
D Dublin (Coventry)
E Cantona (Man United)

Manager

R Atkinson (Coventry)

If your team could be doing better, you can move into the transfer market to improve



Dwight Yorke was the man in form for Aston Villa on Sunday, but will it get him a place in Brampton United?



your fortunes. You can use the ITF transfer system which

allows you to change up to two players each week and to adjust your team if one of your players is actually transferred out of the FA Carling Premiership or Bell's Scottish League premier division.

You can make transfers only by telephone. Using a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone), call the 0891 866 968 line during the times given. From outside the United Kingdom, you must call 0044 990 200 668.

When making a transfer, you must ensure that the team does not contain more than two individuals (two players or one player and a manager) from the same club.

If you are lagging behind the leading team selectors, the transfer system will be an appealing option to you in the chase for the prizes — the overall £50,000, monthly £1,000 or weekly £250.

□ All *Interactive Team Football* transfer queries should be directed to 0171-757 7016. All other inquiries can be made on 01582 488 122.

THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

Pos	Team	(player's name)	Pts
6702	IN	G Strachan	Coventry £1.00m
60402	OUT	T Parkes	Blackburn £3.00m
67071	IN	R Atkinson	Coventry £1.50m
62007	OUT	F Clark	Nottingham Forest £2.50m
41107	IN	V Sanjaya	Everton £0.50m

Pos	Team	(player's name)	Pts
67071	IN	R Atkinson	Coventry £1.50m
62007	OUT	F Clark	Nottingham Forest £2.50m
41107	IN	V Sanjaya	Everton £0.50m

Pos	Team	(player's name)	Pts
67071	IN	R Atkinson	Coventry £1.50m
62007	OUT	F Clark	Nottingham Forest £2.50m
41107	IN	V Sanjaya	Everton £0.50m

THE LEADING 250 ENTRIES IN THE TIMES INTERACTIVE TEAM FOOTBALL GAME

Pos	Team	(player's name)	Pts
1	Sophie And Sam	(G Foster)	366
2	John Hunt Taunton D	(J Hunt)	365
3	John Hunt Taunton H	(J Hunt)	364
4	Nobby 4	(J Hunt)	363
5	John Hunt Taunton F	(J Hunt)	362
6	Nobby 23	(J Brown)	346
7	Tulips Tops	(D Tulip)	342
8	Raj Is Back To Kill	(Mr R Gohli)	336
9	John Hunt Taunton E	(J Hunt)	335
10	Gangsters	(A Lane)	334
11	Brain's Team	(Mr B Howes)	334
12	Daggers	(V Cox)	334
13	John Hunt Taunton C	(J Hunt)	333
14	John Hunt Taunton G	(J Hunt)	328
15	Where's Ray Come?	(Patrick Fromm)	327
16	Inter The Stand	(Mr M Ward)	326
17	James Boys Three	(Mr M Jones)	325
18	Inter The Pub	(Mr M Ward)	323
19	Purple Rain	(Mr B Gohli)	323
20	North's Ark	(G P Dolan)	323
21	Brown's Boys XI	(Mr B Brown)	322
22	Brainbuds United	(Mr G Weiss)	321
23	Nobby	(J Brown)	321
24	Nobby 29	(J Brown)	320
25	Ricky's Roarers	(Mr A Riggs)	319
26	Edme Utd	(Mr D Edmondson)	319
27	Storm	(Mr P Mills)	318
28	Nobby 11	(J Brown)	318
29	James Boys One	(Mr M Jones)	315
30	Raj Is Back To Kill	(Mr R Gohli)	315
31	Nobby 22	(J Brown)	315
32	Nobby 22	(J Brown)	315
33	James Boys 8	(Mr M Jones)	314
34	J S August Monthly 1	(Mr J Swirles)	313
35	Team A	(Mr A Lane)	313
36	Beeston Celtic	(Barry McGivern)	313
37	Nobby 5	(J Brown)	313
38	Hull Red Devils	(G Foster)	312
39	Ab 4	(A Boyland)	312
40	Nonchalant A F C 3	(Mr T J Ward)	311
41	Nobby 21	(J Brown)	311
42	Scholes For Goals	(K Booth)	310
43	Claremont Loyal	(Mr B Fox)	310
44	The Red Devils	(Mr K Booth)	310
45	Team C	(A Lane)	309
46	J S August Monthly 2	(Mr J Swirles)	309
47	M G T Markstone	(Mr J Swirles)	309
48	Inter The Whistler	(Mr M Ward)	309
49	Raj Is Back To Kill	(Mr R Gohli)	308
50	P J Thistle	(Richard Newbould)	308
51	Bobs Boys 2	(R Calder)	308
52	Skyforest	(A Burton)	308
53	Mars FC	(M Barber)	307
54	Buwith Utd 5	(Mr M Larcombe)	306
55	Concrete Bananas	(S Mingle)	306
56	Nobby 34	(J Brown)	306
57	Garforth Seathawks	(I Doughty)	306
58	Its About Revenge C	(Mr R Gohli)	306
59	Bad Time Boys	(R Crook)	305
60	1st Elf	(K J Burns)	304
61	Sky Rockets	(K Farhall)	304
62	A2	(K Farhall)	304
63	Obby 22	(J Brown)	304
64	Northwood XI	(Mr S Mullaney)	303
65	Borky Boys	(R Crook)	303
66	Icarus	(Mrs B Wells)	303
67	Croaky Boys	(Mr R Crook)	303
68	Raj Is Back To Kill	(Mr R Gohli)	303
69	ABC	(M Barber)	303
70	Give From Down Under	(K James)	303

FIND OUT HOW YOUR TEAM IS DOING



Pos	Team	(player's name)	Pts
64	Kingsbury Tn 1	(D F King)	303
72	Layton's Lions 7	(Mr R Layton)	302
74	Orvieto Classico	(DR J Bradshaw)	302
75	Inter The Bin	(Mr M Ward)	301
76	Xpat Missiles	(Martin Jackson)	300
77	The Dansters	(C C Vevers)	300
78	Aldershot Villa	(M Jones)	299
79	Powney City	(Mr P Fowles)	299
80	Bobbeys 1st XI	(Mr S Baldrick)	299
81	Totted Two	(Mr E Gohli)	299
82	Nobby 7	(J Brown)	299
83	Joking	(Mr P Fallent)	298
84	Mark's Magicians II	(Mr M Kingston)	298
85	Nobby 22	(J Brown)	298
86	Nobby 25	(J Brown)	297
87	Nobby 14	(J Brown)	297
88	JJB Sports	(A Bates)	297
89	12 Angry Men	(Daryl Cook)	296
90	John Hunt Taunton B	(J Hunt)	296
91	Jasens Boys Four	(Mr J Gerring)	295
92	Def Con 3	(M Peck)	295
93	Nobby 20	(J Brown)	295
94	China Castle	(Mr B Gohli)	294
95	Moon Machine	(P Fox)	294
96	Turners Earners 6	(P Turner)	294
97	James Boys Sky	(Mika Jones)	294
98	Rother Ramblers	(Mr Evershead)	293
99	We Can't Win	(Mr G Krappner)	293
100	Buwith Utd 3	(Mr M Larcombe)	293
101	Hairy May	(Nick Pearson)	293
102	A	(A Bates)	293
103	Lesleys Logmen	(Mr G Krappner)	293
104	Thing Fish	(I Doughty)	293
105	Red Star Storm	(P Mills)	292
106	D J S 2	(Mr D Sention)	292
107	Pin Ups Two	(Mr P Tusler)	292
108	Le Bouefesters	(Mr J Roebuck)	292
109	Aldo Is Great	(Mr J Holiday)	292
110	Bow Utd	(K J Burns)	292
111	Aldo	(K J Burns)	292
112	F G Parts	(J Mullock)	291

EXCLUSIVE ITF COMPETITION

80 FOOTBALL GAMES TO BE WON



The *Times* Interactive Team Football and Waddingtons are giving ITF players a chance to win one of 40 Subbuteo or The Manager games. The FA Premier League edition of Subbuteo includes two teams, Mitre balls, referee and linesmen, green strips, line flags, goals, scoreboard, pitch cloth and a miniature silver and gold replica trophy. The Manager, created by former England soccer coach Terry Venables, is a football business game which casts players as managers of Premiership football clubs. This is a fun board game for two to six players with questions on entertainment, general knowledge and sport suitable for all the family.

HOW TO ENTER

To enter (only players of *The Times* ITF game) send your name, your ITF team name, ITF pin number and the answer to the question below, on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to: *The Times/Waddingtons*, Comp 16 Whitefriars St, London EC88 2NG. Closing date: Friday, January 31, 1997. Winners will be drawn at random. Normal TNL rules apply. Of which country is Terry Venables now the coach?

CHANGING TIMES

HOW TO MAKE A TRANSFER IN ITF

Call 0891 866 968. If telephoning from outside the United Kingdom call 44 990 200 668. You may make transfers only by telephone using a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone). You will need your ten-digit selector's PIN, which you will have to tap in, not speak. Follow the simple instructions and tap in the five-digit codes of the players you are transferring.

You may only make transfers in one team per telephone call. If you have entered two teams and want to make transfers in both, you must make two separate calls.

You may transfer two (but no more than two) individuals (two players or one player and a manager) during a transfer week. A player being transferred out must be replaced by one player and a manager. You must keep to the team format of a goalkeeper, two full backs, two central defenders, four midfield players, two strikers and a manager. You must not exceed the £35 million budget and have no more than two individuals from the same club. Incorrect transfers will be rejected and your team will remain in its previous form.

The transfer week runs from 00.01 on Tuesday to midnight the following Monday. Transfers made before noon each day will become effective immediately. Transfers made after noon will become effective for matches played after noon on the following day.

Your new player only starts to score points for you when his transfer is registered. The current score of the player transferred out remains part of your team score but he then ceases to score for you.

If a player or manager moves teams during the season, it may affect the composition of your team. You must adjust your team by using the transfer system to avoid missing out on points.

Calls will be charged at 45p per minute (plus 50p per minute at other times). Calls made from public telephones may cost approximately twice as much.

Player out	Club	Player code	Club
Player in	Club	Player code	Club

The ITF players, their points and their values if you are considering the transfer option

Code	Name	Team	En	Pls	Wk	Qv
10101	M Watt	Aberdeen	1.50	0	-3	
10102	N Walker	Aberdeen	1.00	-5	-3	
10201	D Seaman	Arsenal	5.00	0	+27	
10202	V Bartram	Arsenal	0.75	0	0	
10203	J Lukic	Arsenal	0.75	-3	-17	
10301	M Bosnich	Aston Villa	3.50	+5	+6	
10302	M Oakes	Aston Villa	1.00	0	+19	
10401	T Flowers	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	-19	
10402	S Given	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	0	-1	
10501	G Marshall	Blackburn Rovers	3.50	0	-1	
10502	S Kerr	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+5	+5	
10601	D Kharine	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	+10	
10602	K Hitchcock	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	0	-20	
10701	F Grodas	Coventry City	0.75	0	-1	
10702	S Ogilvie	Coventry City	0.50	+4	-15	
10801	J Fian	Coventry City	1.00	0	0	
10802	M Taylor	Coventry City	1.00	0	0	
10901	R Hout	Derby County	1.00	-6	-16	
10902	A Maxwell	Dundee United	0.50	0	+4	
11001	L Ley	Dundee United	0.50	0	-10	
11002	N Westwater	Dundee United	0.50	0	-10	
11101	N Southall	Everton	2.50	+10	+1	
11102	P Gerrard	Everton	2.50	0	-1	
11201	G Rousseau	Everton	2.00	-7	-17	
11202	J Leighton	Everton	1.50	+5	-2	
11301	D Lefkovic	Kilmarnock	1.00	-1	-21	
11302	M Bennett	Kilmarnock	1.00	0	0	
11401	P Evans	Leeds United	1.50	0	0	
11402	N Marlyn	Leeds United	0.25	0	0	
11501	K Poole	Leeds United	2.50	+5	+19	
11502	K Keller	Leeds United	1.00	0	-8	
11601	D James	Leeds United	1.00	-3	-9	
11602	T Warner	Leeds United	5.00	-3	+8	
11701	P Schmeichel	Leeds United	5.00	+4	-12	
11702	R Van Der Gouw	Leeds United	1.00	0	-1	
11801	G Walsh	Middlesbrough	1.50	0	-14	
11802	A Miller	Middlesbrough	1.50	0	-23	
11901	S Howie	Middlesbrough	1.50	0	-19	
12001	S Hisslop	Newcastle United	4.00	0	-3	
12002	P Strickland	Newcastle United	3.00	-3	-2	
12101	M Campbell	Nottingham Forest	2.50	-8	-31	
12102	A Fettes	Nottingham Forest	0.75	0	0	
12201	T Wright	Nottingham Forest	0.75	0	0	
12202	S Thomson	Raith Rovers	0.50	-5	-14	
12301	A Gorman	Rangers	5.00	+4	+13	
12302	K Pressman	Sheffield Wednesday	2.00	-2	+3	
12401	M Clarke	Sheffield Wednesday	0.50	0	0	
12402	D Beasant	Sheffield Wednesday	1.00	-1	-17	
12501	N Moss	Sheffield Wednesday	1.00	0	-2	
12502	C Woods	Sheffield Wednesday	1.50	0	-19	
12601	L Perez	Sunderland	0.50	-11	-19	
12602	T Coton	Sunderland	1.00	0	+9	
12701	I Walker	Tottenham Hotspur	3.50	-1	-15	
12702	E Baardse	Tottenham Hotspur	0.50	0	-21	
12801	L Mladkovic	West Ham United	2.00	-5	-21	
12802	S Marshall	West Ham United	0.50	0	-21	
12901	N Sullivan	Wimbledon	1.00	-9	+3	
12902	P Head	Wimbledon	1.00	0	0	

Code	Name	Team	En	Pls	Wk	Qv
20101	S McKimmie	Aberdeen	2.00	0	+11	
20102	L Dixon	Aberdeen	3.00	0	+20	
20201	N Winterburn	Arsenal	3.00	-1	-16	
20202	S Morrow	Arsenal	3.00	+3	+3	
20301	S Staunton	Aston Villa	3.00	+4	+28	
20302	A Wright	Aston Villa	3.00	+4	+32	
20303	G Charles	Aston Villa	2.50	0	0	
20304	P King	Aston Villa	0.25	0	0	
20305	F Nelson	Aston Villa	3.00	+1	+25	
20401	H Berg	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	-8	
20402	G Le Saux	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	-1	
20403	S Minto	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	-1	
20404	G Croft	Blackburn Rovers	1.50	0	+2	
20501	J McKinnay	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	0	+7	
20502	T McKinnay	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	+4	+2	
20601	D Petrescu	Blackburn Rovers	3.00	-1	-4	
20602	S Clarke	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	0	0	
20603	T Phelan	Blackburn Rovers	2.00	0	0	
20701	D Burrows	Coventry City	1.50	0	-7	
20702	B Burrows	Coventry City	1.00	0	-5	
20703	M Hall	Coventry City	1.00	0	+4	
20704	R Genat	Coventry City	1.50	0	-2	
20801	C Powell	Derby County	1.50	-2	-1	
20802	D Yates	Derby County	1.00	-1	-1	
20803	P Parker	Derby County	1.00	0	+4	
20901	M Malpas	Dundee United	0.50	0	+15	
20902	M Perry	Dundee United	0.50	0	+6	
20903	N Duffy	Dundee United	0.50	0	+7	
21001	C Miller	Dundee United	0.25	-1	-7	
21002	A Tod	Dundee United	0.25	-1	-7	
21101	M Hogg	Everton	2.50	0	+14	
21102	A Hinchcliffe	Everton	1.50	+8	+16	
21201	E Barrett	Everton	1.00	0	0	
21202	M Jackson	Everton	1.00	0	0	
21301	G Locke	Everton	2.00	0	0	
21302	N Poulton	Everton	1.00	-3	-5	
21303	W Miller	Everton	1.00	0	+2	
21401	A Dow	Hibernian	1.00	+4	+16	
21402	G MacPherson	Hibernian	0.50	0	-10	
21501	G Kelly	Kilmarnock	3.00	0	-10	
21502	T Dorog	Kilmarnock	2.50	0	-1	
21503	P Beasley	Leeds United	0.50	+4	+17	
21504	G Hail	Leeds United	1.00	+3	+3	
21601	M Whitlow	Leeds United	0.50	0	+6	
21602	S Grayson	Leeds United	0.50	-1	-7	
21603	N Lewis	Leeds United	0.50	0	-2	
21604	F Rolland	Leeds United	0.50	0	-2	
21701	R Joseph	Liverpool	3.00	0	0	
21702	S Harkness	Liverpool	1.50	0	0	
21703	S Bjornby	Liverpool	0.50	-1	-24	
21801	D Irwin	Manchester United	4.00	+4	+16	
21802	G Neville	Manchester United	3.00	+4	+13	
21803	P Neville	Manchester United	3.00	+4	+12	
21901	N Cox	Middlesbrough	2.00	0	-11	
21902	N Cox	Middlesbrough	1.50	0	-1	
21903	C Fleming	Middlesbrough	0.75	0	-5	
21904	S Blackmore	Middlesbrough	0.25	0	0	
22001	S McMillan	Middlesbrough	0.50	-2	-3	
22002	W Barton	Middlesbrough	3.00	0	-1	
22003	S Watson	Newcastle United	3.00	0	-1	
22101	R Elliott	Newcastle United	2.50	0	-7	
22102	D Beardsley	Newcastle United	2.50	0	-7	
22201	S Pearce	Nottingham Forest	4.00	0	+2	
22202	D Lytle	Nottingham Forest	2.00	-4	-8	
22203	A Hesland	Nottingham Forest	1.00	+3	+7	
22204	N Jerlan	Nottingham Forest	2.00	0	0	
22301	P Bonar	Raith Rovers	0.75	0	-5	
22302	D Kirkwood	Raith Rovers	0.50	0	-5	
22401	D Robertson	Rangers	2.50	+5	+11	
22402	J Brown	Rangers	2.00	0	0	
22501	I Nolan	Sheffield Wednesday	1.50	+3	+15	
22502	P Atherton	Sheffield Wednesday	1.50	0	0	
22503	S Nicol	Sheffield Wednesday	1.00	0	+5	
22504	D Stefanovic	Sheffield Wednesday	0.50	0	0	
22505	J Dodd	Sheffield Wednesday	1.50	0	-5	
22601	F Benall	Sheffield Wednesday	0.75	-1	-7	
22602	S Charlton	Sheffield Wednesday	0.75	0	-9	
22701	D Kubicki	Sunderland	0.50	0	+4	
22702	M Scott	Sunderland	0.25	-4	-1	
22703	G Hall	Tottenham Hotspur	2.00	0	0	
22801	Austin	Tottenham Hotspur	2.00	0	+23	
22802	C Wilson	Tottenham Hotspur	1.00	0	+12	
22803	J Edinburg	Tottenham Hotspur	0.50	0	0	
22804	D Kerslake	Tottenham Hotspur	1.00	0	-4	
22805	S Carr	Tottenham Hotspur	4.00	+2	+10	
22901	J Dicks	West Ham United	1.00	0	+4	
22902	T Brecker	West Ham United	1.00	-3	0	
22903	K Rowland	West Ham United	1.00	0	0	
22904	M Bowen	West Ham United	0.50	0	0	
22905	K Brown	West Ham United	1.50	0	+9	
23001	B Thatcher	Wimbledon	0.75	-5	-3	
23002	A Kibbe	Wimbledon	0.75	-2	-14	
23003	K Cunningham	Wimbledon	0.75	0	0	
23004	D Jupp	Wimbledon	0.25	-3	-18	
23005	C Perry	Wimbledon	0.25	-3	-18	

Code	Name	Team	En	Pls	Wk	Qv
30101	B Irvine	Aberdeen	2.00	-2	-10	
30102	C Woodthorpe	Aberdeen	1.50	0	-3	
30201	T Adams	Arsenal	4.00	0	+16	
30202	S Bould	Arsenal	3.00	-1	-18	
30203	M Keown	Arsenal	1.00	-1	-8	
30204	A Lingham	Arsenal	1.00	0	0	
30205	S Blackwell	Arsenal	1.00	0	0	
30301	G Southgate	Aston Villa	3.50	0	+16	



Beesley, the Leeds United defender, tackles Michael Branch, of Everton. Leeds have had five successive clean sheets.

Code	Name	Team	En	Pls	Wk	Qv
30302	U Ehiogu	Aston Villa	3.00	+4	+37	
30303	C Tiler	Aston Villa	1.00	0	+9	
30304	R Scimeca	Aston Villa	1.00	+4	+17	
30401	C Hendry	Blackburn Rovers	4.00	0	+1	
30402	I Pearce	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	0	
30403	C Coleman	Blackburn Rovers	2.50	0	-3	
30404	N Marler	Blackburn Rovers	0.50	0	+2	
30501	T Boyd	Celtic	3.00	+4	+14	
30502	M MacKay	Celtic	1.50	0	+2	
30503	A Stubb	Celtic	3.50	+4	+13	
30504	B O'Neill	Celtic	3.00	+4	+5	
30601	M Duberry	Chelsea	2.50	-1	-7	
-9						
30602	F Leboeuf	Chelsea	2.50	0	+13	
30603	F Sinclair	Chelsea	2.00	0	-2	
30604	D Lee	Chelsea	2.00	0	+3	
30605	A Myers	Chelsea	1.50	0	+5	
30606	E Johnson	Chelsea	1.50	0	+10	
30701	L Dalish	Coventry City	2.00	+4	+4	
30702	R Shaw	Coventry City	1.50	+4	+3	
30801	I Stinac	Derby County	2.50	-4	-8	
30802	D Wassall	Derby County	1.00	0	0	
30803	P McGrath	Derby County	2.50	0	+1	
30804	J Laurens	Derby County	1.00	-1	-5	
30805	M Carlson	Derby County	0.50	0	-1	
30901	S Presley	Dundee United	1.00	+1	+14	
31001	M Miller	Dundee United	0.75	-1	-2	
31002	I Den Blamen	Dundee United	0.75	-2	-12	
31101	D Unsworth	Everton	2.50	+3	+13	
31102	D Watson	Everton	2.50	+8	+10	
31103	C Short	Everton	2.00	0	+9	
31201	D McPherson	Hearts	1.00	0	+8	
31202	P Ritchie	Hearts	1.00	-4	-12	
31301	J MacLachlan	Hibernian	0.50	0	-4	
30902	G Hunter	Hibernian	0.75	+4	+13	
31401	M Reilly	Kilmarnock	1.00	-1	-1	
31402	R Montgomery	Kilmarnock	0.75	0	-1	
31501	D Wetherall	Leeds United	2.50	+4	+19	
31502	R Johnson	Leeds United	1.00	0	+2	
31503	L Radebe	Leeds United	1.00	0	+12	
31504	J Pemberton	Leeds United	0.50	0	0	
31601	S Walsh	Leeds United	1.00	0	+8	
31602	J Watts	Leeds United	1.00	0	+9	
31603	P Karmark	Leicester City	0.50	-1	-1	
31604	S Prior	Leicester City	1.00	-1	+6	
31701	P Babib	Liverpool	3.50	-1	-12	
31703	M Wright	Liverpool	3.50	0	+15	
31704	N Ruddock	Liverpool	3.00	0	+10	
31705	D Matthews	Liverpool	1.00	0	+14	
31801	G Palfrey	Manchester United	3.50	+1	+2	
31802	D May	Manchester United	3.00	+3	+13	
31803	R Johnson	Manchester United	2.50	0	+10	
31901	N Pearson	Middlesbrough	1.50	0	-9	
31902	S Vickers	Middlesbrough	1.50	0	-7	
31903	D Whyte	Middlesbrough	1.50	-10	-13	
31904	P Wheelan	Middlesbrough	0.75	-4	-14	
32001	B Martin	Motherwell	1.50	-2	-2	
32002	M McFarlane	Motherwell	0.75	-3	-3	
32101	P Albert	Newcastle United	4.50	-1	-10	
32102	S Howey	Newcastle United	3.00	0	+7	
32103	D Peacock	Newcastle United	3.00	-1	+13	
32201	C Cooper	Nottingham Forest	3.00	-3	-3	
32202	S Chettle	Nottingham Forest	2.50	0	+2	
32203	S Blatherwick	Nottingham Forest	1.00	0	-3	
32302	S Dennis	Raith Rovers	1.00	0	-19	
32401	R Gough	Rangers	3.50	-1	-1	
-12						
32402	A McLaren	Rangers	3.50	0	0	
32403	J Bjorlund	Rangers	3.00	0	+17	
32404	G Petric	Rangers	2.50	-1	+13	
32501	J Newsome	Sheffield Wednesday	2.00	0	+6	
32502	D Walker	Sheffield Wednesday	1.50	0	+17	
32503	B Lingham	Sheffield Wednesday	1.50	0	-10	
32601	K Konkou	Southampton	1.00	0	-1	
32602	A Neilson	Southampton	1.00	0	-2	
32603	R Dryden	Southampton	0.50	-1	-4	
32604	C Lundekvam	Southampton	0.50	0	-11	
32605	U Van Gooel	Southampton	1.50	0	-17	
32701	A McVellie	Sunderland	1.00	-4	-14	
32702	K Bell	Sunderland	4.00	-10	-10	
32801	C Ord	Sunderland	0.50	-4	-10	
32801	S Campbell	Tottenham Hotspur	2.50	0	+23	
31702	J Scales	Tottenham Hotspur	3.50	0	0	
32802	C Calderwood	Tottenham Hotspur	2.50	-1	+19	
32803	G Mabbutt	Tottenham Hotspur	2.00	0	0	
32804	K Scott	Tottenham Hotspur	0.50	0	-1	
32805	M Wherrett	Tottenham Hotspur	0.50	0	-3	
32901	S Bittie	West Ham United	2.50	-2	+3	
32902	M Rieper	West Ham United	2.50	-2	+3	
32903	S Potts	West Ham United	2.00	0	-3	
32904	R Hall	West Ham United	1.50	0	0	
32905	R Forthman	West Ham United	1.00	0	0	
33001	A Ales	Wimbledon	0.50	0	-5	
33003	A Pearce	Wimbledon	0.75	0	0	
33004	D Blackwell	Wimbledon	0.50	-4	+4	
33005	B McAllister	Wimbledon	0.50	-1	+11	
33006	S Fitzgerald	Wimbledon	0.25	0	0	

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

TUESDAY DECEMBER 24 1996

Northern's fate to be decided today

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE fate of Northern Electric was in the balance as the Takeover Panel's full executive committee held an emergency meeting last night to consider the company's plea for independence.

The panel was meeting to rule on Northern's request to overturn an extension to the bid period which will give control to CE Electric, which is bidding £782 million.

Northern shares were suspended but lobbying of institutions by the two sides continued after the deadline was extended on Friday night to today.

The panel is mounting a full investigation into a fee paid by Northern to BZW, one of its advisers.

The outcome of the bitterly contested bid by CE Electric hangs on whether the Takeover Panel's executive overturns a decision made late on Friday night to extend the bid period to this lunchtime.

Northern is fighting the move because by lunchtime on Friday — the original deadline for bid acceptances — it had retained independence after CE Electric captured only

49.77 per cent of shares. By the weekend CE Electric said that late acceptances had pushed it to victory with 50.33 per cent.

The panel's bid extension and the challenge by Northern take the takeover into uncharted territory and effectively means that the Takeover Panel, which oversees procedure in takeovers and mergers, has the last word in whether Northern remains independent.

Northern moved yesterday morning to appeal against the decision to extend the bid period, made after the Panel is believed to have become concerned over the "discretionary" payment of £250,000 to BZW by Northern. The payment is made in addition to a flat rate fee of £1.5 million for work on the bid defence.

At the heart of the issue is whether the payment, which BZW said was not performance-related, was connected with the controversial purchase of shares by BZW and Schroders. Both sets of advisers have been prevented from buying further shares although the panel had cleared their

initial purchases. The purchase of more than 2 per cent of Northern's shares had a crucial effect on the outcome of the bid as it stood on Friday afternoon.

The fee payment to BZW has been frozen and Northern's shares were suspended pending the panel appeal. The panel is refusing to give its reasons officially for the bid extension until after the outcome of the appeal.

BZW is refusing to comment on its own appeal, which is thought to have been made separately from Northern.

The discretionary payment was made known to the panel on Friday, the last day of the bid and the day when advisers are customarily paid.

It is possible the Securities and Futures Authority will become involved if the Takeover Panel finds any improper action from BZW. A spokesman for the broker said it would co-operate with the investigation fully. He said: "We would expect full exoneration."

Northern and CE Electric both continued to fight for the support of institutions and individual shareholders yesterday. With the bid extended until 1pm today the fate of Northern could still be sealed by withdrawal of acceptances.

The Takeover Panel's decision will be final although Northern could seek a higher appeal through a judicial review. However, this course of action is not thought likely.

The Director-General of the panel is Alistair Defries who headed the corporate finance team that defended Northern Electric against its first hostile bid from Trafalgar House.

Pennington, page 23

Sears on brink of Freemans deal

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SEARS, the retailing group, is close to agreeing the sale of its Freemans home shopping business to Littlewoods, Sears revealed yesterday.

Littlewoods, the family-owned retailing and pools business, is expected to pay between £350 million and £400 million for Freemans. It has had to beat off other bidders, believed to include Otto Versand, of Germany; N Brown, the mail order specialist, chaired by Sir David Alliance; and Great Universal Stores, Britain's largest mail order company.

The sale is conditional on the agreement of terms and the approval of Sears shareholders. The Office of Fair Trading would also have to indicate that it does not intend to refer the bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Littlewoods is understood to have been in touch with the OFT in the last few days. It is thought the deal is unlikely to be referred because a combined Free-

mans and Littlewoods would still be smaller than GUS. Littlewoods has a market share of about 30 per cent, while GUS controls some 35 per cent of the market.

Sears, which includes the Selfridges, Warehouse, Wallis and British Shoe Corporation businesses, is expected to return to shareholders cash raised from the deal. The City remained unexcited by the news of progress, however, with Sears shares edging up just 1p to 89.5p, and Liam Strong, chief executive of the sprawling group, remains under pressure to improve its performance.

Both Littlewoods and Freemans specialise in agency mail order. The companies publish large catalogues and pay fees to agencies who place orders on behalf of friends and family. The agency business is in decline but still makes up by far the largest part of the mail order sector.

Temps, page 24

LucasVarity finance chief replaced after four months

BY ERIC REGULY

JOHN GRANT has been ousted as finance director of LucasVarity, four months after Lucas and Varity merged to form one of the world's largest automotive components groups. He left with share options and compensation totalling £1.6 million.

LucasVarity said Mr Grant, 49, the former finance director of Lucas Industries, was told after a board meeting last Wednesday that he was to be replaced by Neil Arnold, also 49, who was Varity's chief financial officer. A spokesman said: "The board concluded that the company wanted someone with more international experience and outlook."

Analysts, however, said that Mr Grant was marked simply because "he was a Lucas man". Although the companies came together in a one-for-one share



Grant: "a Lucas man"

swap, Varity is beginning to exert management control over the group. Mr Grant's departure reduces the number of LucasVarity board members to ten, giving equal representation to each company.

Mr Grant was on a two-year rolling contract and will be paid about £575,000 in salary

and other benefits. He also leaves with 800,000 share options, most granted at 95p. At yesterday's closing price of 226.5p, down 6p, the options are worth about £1 million.

Mr Grant joined Lucas in 1992 after a career at Ford of Europe in the treasury and business strategy departments. He was not available to comment about his plans.

Mr Arnold joined Varity, formerly Massey Ferguson, 26 years ago, starting in the Perkins engines division in Peterborough. In 1975, he moved to the head office in Canada, where he joined the finance department, and became treasurer in 1981. He played a key role in the restructuring of the near-bankrupt company, which involved debt negotiations with 250 lenders and four governments, in the 1980s. In 1990, he became Varity's chief financial officer.



'Twas the day before Christmas... a costumed Bifu official explains why it is calling a strike at Lloyds Bank today

Bifu invokes the Santa clause

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

THE Banking Insurance and Finance Union (Bifu) enlisted Santa Claus yesterday to tell Lloyds TSB customers in the City of London why it is calling for its 16,000 members at the bank to strike this afternoon.

Bifu is protesting at the bank's plans to keep branches open until 4.30pm, in spite of

a traditional agreement to close at lunchtime on Christmas Eve. The bank did not know how many branches would be affected but said all cashpoint machines should be working.

Bifu claimed the bank had largely backed down by agreeing to let many people go earlier than 4.30pm. A spokes-

man for the union said: "We don't think there will be any customers to be disrupted." A Bifu spokesman said there would be no pickets outside branches. "The idea is to get as many people home as soon as possible."

NatWest staff last week rejected Bifu's strike calls. Its branches will stay open until

3.30pm today. Barclays said most of its 2,000 branches would be open in the afternoon, but local management could arrange to close if there was insufficient demand. [16,000 Bifu members are due to strike on January 2 in Scotland against the bank's moves to change the bank holiday.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET MOVEMENTS		
FTSE 100	4087.2	(+9.6)
Yield	3.56%	
FTSE All share	1098.06	(+4.35)
Altilis	Closed	
New York		
Dow Jones	6302.47	(+18.07)
S&P Composite	748.54	(+0.33)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	98 1/2%	(98 1/2%)
Yield	6.57%	(6.59%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Life long rate	100%	(100%)
STERLING		
New York	1.6715	(1.6703)
London		
\$	1.6735	(1.6667)
DM	2.5898	(2.5888)
FF	5.7700	(5.7452)
SP	5.2508	(5.2340)
Yen	190.72	(190.28)
S Index	94.5	(94.1)
DOLLAR		
London		
DM	1.5583	(1.5518)
FF	5.2505	(5.2375)
SP	5.2508	(5.2340)
Yen	114.10	(114.35)
S Index	98.3	(98.4)
Tokyo close Yen 114.20		
NOTES/SECURITIES		
10-year Treasury	102.70	(102.90)
Brent 15-day oil	\$22.70	(22.90)
GOLD		
London close	\$368.85	(369.35)
* denotes midday trading price		

New deal

The Industrial Society today urges unions and employers to agree an employment charter, called New Deal at Work, covering pay, hours and industrial relations. Page 22

BA settles

British Airways has agreed to settle a dispute with Caledonian Airways over aircraft maintenance at a cost of £6 million. Caledonian's parent company says the disruption cost the company £17 million. Page 23

George's fear for inflation target

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

EDDIE GEORGE, Governor of the Bank of England, warned the Chancellor that the small rate rise of late October might not be enough to give a better than even chance of hitting his inflation target.

In the minutes of the October 30 monetary meeting, after which base rates were raised a quarter point to 6 per cent, the Governor cited accelerating economic growth and the failure of inflation to fall back as had been expected as key reasons behind his recommendation of a rate rise.

He intimated that a further

monetary tightening might be needed but also noted that raising rates earlier than the markets had been expecting would have a "relatively strong signal effect on the credibility of policy".

He added: "That would reduce the size and speed of the rise in rates that might eventually be necessary to make the inflation target secure and sustain the economic expansion."

His comments appear to be consistent with remarks made subsequently, notably in testimony before the Treasury Select Committee earlier this

month. He said that rates may have to rise again but the need was not dramatic or urgent.

For his part, the minutes show that Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, agreed with the Governor's recommendation. However, the two men disagreed fundamentally on the impact of sterling's appreciation on the monetary situation, leaving the way open for potential disagreement on rates in the new year.

The Bank argued that, while sterling's strength might offset some domestically generated inflationary pressures, it did nothing directly to address the

source of these pressures — namely an upswing in domestic demand. Sterling's rise was not, in itself, a tightening of monetary policy. In contrast, Mr Clarke and his advisers argued it did tighten policy.

The timing of any further rate rise is uncertain. The two men meet again on January 15 and, if under pressure from the Bank to raise rates, Mr Clarke may move swiftly to avoid such an unpopular step too close to the election. On the other hand, the Chancellor may wait until February's monetary meeting when he will have the benefit of fourth-quarter growth figures.

RJB plans to lift earnings with £34m share buyback

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

RJB MINING, the independent coal producer whose shares fell sharply after a profit downgrade by its broker earlier this month, has announced plans for a £34 million share buyback.

Shares of RJB, Britain's largest independent coal producer, fell 23 per cent to 372.5p from 485p after BZW sharply downgraded its profits forecast for the next two years.

Gordon McFee, RJB's finance director, said the company wanted the ability to lift earnings per share through a buyback while the share price was subdued. Yesterday it stood at 439p after recovering ground from its fall. Mr McFee said a 5 per cent buyback could deliver an earnings per share increase of about four per cent on yesterday's price. The buyback re-

quires the approval of shareholders at a special meeting next month.

The buyback will stretch to the limit the company's jurisdiction for buying back its shares after a £94 million repurchase in July. Companies are allowed to buy a maximum of 15 per cent of

their own shares in a full year with the permission of their shareholders.

RJB's share price has seen a fall in the past 12 months from a high of 645p to the low of 372.5p. BZW downgraded profits because of cheap coal imports and production problems at one of its collieries.

RJB will soon renegotiate important contracts with the electricity generators — the first to be discussed in the privatised electricity industry. Despite its success since buying the bulk of British Coal's mines, RJB faces increasing competition from gas as a fuel for electricity generation. The generators were originally locked into contracts to buy British coal, but these expire in 1998.

BOXING DAY IN THE TIMES

In The Times on Boxing Day find out how tens of thousands of building society customers are missing out on bonuses averaging £7,000 each. Also financial market updates and news stories

Pennington, page 23

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SALE

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And So To Bed Studios at
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Employees get chance to become traders in the perks market

Fraser Nelson reports on the American system of flexible benefits tipped to grow over here

Office parties, flu epidemics and desperate attempts to use unclaimed holidays before the year end have long been traditional ingredients of the corporate Christmas. The hangers-on and smug remain, but the choice between using or losing holiday allowance is gradually dying out. Its replacement is a US-style benefits system that invites workers to exchange unused holiday for healthcare, extra pension or hard cash. The flexible benefits system is designed to release the difference between what a perk costs the company and what it is worth to the employee. The worker is given a fixed budget with which to pick from the benefits menu, and pocket any change. Although the system is used by nearly half of US companies, it is taking a long time to reach Britain. It represents little short of a revolution in remuneration culture, replacing the UK's traditional paternalistic benefits system and empowering the employee. However, the arguments for the new system are becoming hard to ignore. Workers no longer expect jobs for life and now turn up at interview with their own life cover, pensions and healthcare scheme. Additional benefits mean duplication, unnecessary handouts and what is becoming, for companies, wholesale waste. Although British firms are hesitant to plunge into a fully flexible system, a growing number, including Lloyds TSB, are prepared to sample it. The bank's overall benefits are not flexible, but it has extended the shelf-life of holiday allowance from 12 to 15 months. Barclays Bank goes further, with unused holiday valid for life. Its holiday fund lets staff keep up to five days' holiday allowance on ice indefinitely. KPMG runs a holiday "bank", whose currency is overtime. Each

extra hour employees work is credited to their leisure account, from which a holiday can be withdrawn. Companies are not, however, throwing other benefits. Mercury Communications is alone among blue chip companies in having a full-blooded, money-on-the-table system of flexible benefits. Its 18-month-old system takes in everything from life assurance to child-care vouchers. Employees can trade benefits to fit their lifestyle. The most frequently traded of Mercury's benefits is holiday. Twenty-five days are standard issue, of which employees can sell up to five. Alternatively, other benefits can be traded in for more holiday, to a maximum of 30 days.

A quarter of Mercury staff have traded their holidays this year, with sellers outnumbering buyers. Whereas the Barclays holiday bank is open only to those with 15 years' service, Mercury's system includes everyone, including part-timers. They are offered a mini-flex system, in which they can buy and sell hours per week, rather than days per year. The cash value of each holiday is found by dividing basic salary by working days. To Mercury, all days are equal: it pays out the same for Christmas Eve as for any day. In the US, some firms buy back holidays at a sharp premium to the selling price, to lure workers back from vacation in times of need.

This has given rise to holiday futures traders. Canny employees can request holidays when they expect things to be busy, using credits in their holiday bank. If they bet correctly, the firm may buy back the holiday for twice the amount paid for it. A fledgling system can have defects, as the Royal Mail discovered when it pioneered a "cafeteria" benefits package four years ago. John Millidge, then its head of pay, turned to a flexible system to revamp an ailing benefits package. "Our managers had good basic salaries, but lousy perks," he said. "We were having real problems recruiting." He recalls: "To start with, it

didn't work terribly well. Drivers with poor insurance records opted for company cars, which ended up being quite expensive. And we found that the walking wounded were claiming the health insurance, which also hit us quite badly. "But we learned an incredible amount. People who lived in London were opting for the cash rather than the car, and when the government pay restrictions came, people could opt for more salary and maintain their standard of living by giving up their car or the healthcare." The Royal Mail found that flexible benefits can perform the fiscal alchemy of giving employees more value from their perks at the same cost to the employer. Also, freedom of choice had its own value as another bargaining chip in recruiting. From its roots as a novelty, flexible benefit is now being adopted by companies nervous about falling behind. Management consul-

ants say that the debate in British companies has now focused on when, rather than whether, to make the switch. Carol Woodley, partner in human capital services at Arthur Andersen, forecasts that the new system will become more visible over the next year as big-name companies put long-held plans into effect. Cathy Turner, head of Ernst & Young's compensation practice, says that the collapse of tax benefits on company cars has acted as a catalyst for change. "From a company's perspective, the advantage of the system is that it gives more choice to the employee while leaving the power completely in the firm's hands," she says. "British companies are now emerging from three years of downsizing, and those who may need extra help will find it useful to buy a few more days of their workers' time."

Industrial Society calls for new deal at work

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

BRITAIN needs a new deal at work, based on a partnership between employers and employees, business and trade union leaders say today. The call for a new jobs framework based around a new employment charter comes from the Industrial Society, the joint employer-employee body seeking improved workplace relations. In their call for a new deal, leaders of the Industrial Society, which brings together business, union and other leaders on a range of training, work and similar issues, believe they are seizing on a new consensus for co-operation before the general election. But in its emphasis on mutual rights and responsibilities, the society's new employment charter may well be viewed suspiciously by government ministers, who are likely to regard it as too closely in line with the proposals for partnership at work being put forward by Tony Blair, the Labour leader. Labour's employment campaign in the election will centre on the adoption of minimum standards at work, and the society today says that in an era of globalisation and

free trade, minimum standards are essential for the benefit of employers and employees alike. In terms highly reminiscent of those of Labour leaders, Jo Gardiner, Industrial Society campaigns manager, says: "We will not survive by ratcheting down standards of conduct, terms and conditions for short-term gains." The society rejects as "unhelpful and unworkable" the proposals for further changes in employee relations put forward in the Government's latest green paper on strikes and trade unions, and says that the proposals are themselves a disproportionate reaction to the outbreak of strikes in the summer. Ms Gardiner says: "We are not going to find the solutions we need in the past. What we need is a new deal at work. The time is right, the potential partners are ready."

"For UK businesses and organisations, civilised productive partnerships between employers and employees will be the only route to future long-term competitiveness." The society's employment charter, which it says is aimed at moving the argument over industrial relations and employment rights forwards rather than backwards, says that employees are entitled to fair pay and benefits, regular consultation and working arrangements which balance work and home, together with other provisions. In return, employees should operate responsibly, resolve any disagreements constructively and work flexibly, accommodating new ideas and practices. John Monks, TUC General Secretary, says: "The choice is clear: either we accept the status quo, or we move to co-operation." John Edmonds, leader of the GMB general union, says there is now the "best chance for 15 years" we'd better go for it. For employers, the CBI says: "Employers need an initiative to build up momentum in employee relations practices."



Colin Hook said the company was in a stronger position than a year or two ago

Ivory & Sime sees fall of 12% in funds at half time

By Gavin Lumsden

IVORY & SIME, the investment group, yesterday blamed the rise in sterling and economic weakness in Asia for a 12 per cent fall in funds under its management in the six months to October 31. The company, which manages more than half of its assets overseas, saw its funds fall £500 million to £3.77 billion, a rise of just 2.9 per cent over 12 months. This was exacerbated by BAA's decision to take £200 million of its pension fund money away from Ivory & Sime. Nevertheless, Colin Hook, managing director, said the company hoped to launch

a new Asian investment trust next month. Ivory & Sime manages £1.5 billion in segregated pension funds and £2.3 billion in its investment trusts. Despite the setbacks, Mr Hook said the revenue stream remained steady with pre-tax profits up 27.7 per cent to £3.77 million. The company also announced a 14 per cent increase in the interim dividend to 2.85p, payable on January 31, and said the final dividend would not be less than 5.75p. Earnings per share were 7.60p, up 19.3 per cent. Mr Hook said: "The company is

undeniably in a stronger position than it was a year or two ago and if it wasn't for circumstances beyond our control the results would have been less mixed."

Mr Hook said a £2.1 million rise in administration costs to £6.59 million was due to last year's takeover of Clan Asset Management and Baronsmead and this year's redesign of the corporate identity. It also anticipated future recruitment of staff, he said. Two weeks ago Ivory & Sime said Gordon Neilly, who joined in 1984, would leave the board next month.

Post Office profits to soar after record Christmas

By Oliver August

A RECORD number of Christmas cards and letters has been delivered to the nation, positioning the Post Office for further earnings increases after the rise in interim pre-tax profits from £170 million to £230 million. The number of seasonal greetings has hit the two billion mark for the first time, beating last year's 1.8 billion. Mail volumes peaked on December 16, when more than 128 million items were posted — the largest number of letters ever posted in a single day in the Post Office's 350-year history.

Post Office profits will be used to satisfy the Treasury's 1996-97 cash requirement, which this financial year amounts to nearly £300 million, and to pay corporation tax.

The basic price of stamps was increased by 1p last summer in direct response to the growing cash demands of the Government, according to the Post Office.

A spokesman said: "The Post Office and all its businesses will have to work hard for the rest of the financial year if we are to meet the Government's demanding cash and efficiency targets. The cash target amounts to £1 million every working day."

In the six months to September 28, turnover increased from £2.9 billion to £3 billion in spite of several one-day strikes. During the four-week Christmas period, more than 250 million parcels have been delivered by Parcelforce, a 20 per cent increase on 1995. The company has to nearly double the number of night-time flights to distribute the post around the country during the Christmas period.

Royal Mail's fleet, Skynet, adds an extra 25 flights to its routine 32 journeys, which is already Britain's biggest night-time charter operation.

The huge seasonal workload has been shouldered by more than 130,000 postmen and women, helped by 25,000 extras recruited for the Christmas period. Royal Mail adds an extra 2,000 vehicles to the 30,000-strong fleet to deliver the Christmas mail.

BAA unveils City rail link for Heathrow

PLANS for a £30 million rail link between Heathrow and St Pancras station in north London opening in 1999 were unveiled yesterday by BAA. The 35-minute service is aimed at improving public transport connections between the airport and the City of London, currently linked only by the Piccadilly line of the Underground from Holborn. It will operate in tandem with the £400 million Heathrow Express rail service between the airport and Paddington in west London.

The service will run four times an hour, stopping at three stations in west and north London and will cost around £9 for a single journey. From 2003 the link will also connect with Eurostar services to the Continent departing from the planned international terminal at St Pancras. However, the announcement provoked fury at Virgin Group, which has been working on its own version of the link and had hoped BAA would grant it permission to build and develop the line itself.

Green light for B&W

THE planned £600 million takeover of the Bristol & West Building Society by the Bank of Ireland has been given the go-ahead by the Government. B&W investors of more than two years' standing should receive a cash windfall of at least £500, plus an amount related to their savings balances. Other savers, together with customers with mortgage accounts, should get £250 in B&W preference shares. Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, said he had decided not to refer the proposal to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

American boost for S&N

SMITH & NEPHEW, the healthcare company, expects to launch Dermagraft, its bio-engineered skin replacement, in late 1997. The announcement came after the US Food and Drug Administration accepted an application for regulatory approval of Dermagraft for the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers. Clinical trials showed healing time fell in patients who used the product. S&N and Advanced Tissue Sciences of America have formed a joint venture to develop Dermagraft.

Littlewoods stores sold

ARGENT, the property investment company, has acquired seven Littlewoods department stores for a total consideration of £32.2 million. The stores have been leased back to Littlewoods on new 25-year leases at an aggregate initial rent of £2.46 million. The stores are located in Bristol, Cheltenham, Glasgow, Kirkcaldy, Lewisham, Oldham and Weston-Super-Mare. Argent shares rose 8p to 406½p yesterday.

Robeco buys manager

ROBECO GROUP, The Netherlands property company, has agreed to acquire Argyll Property Asset Managers from Scottish Amicable Investment Managers for an undisclosed sum. Argyll has contracts to manage £1.7 billion of property assets. Its largest client is Scottish Amicable, with a portfolio of £950 million. Argyll will operate independently in the UK and will offer services to overseas investors who want their property investments to be managed in the UK.

Takeover talk lifts OGC

SHARES of OGC International rose 4½p to 116p after the oil and gas industry services company said it had received a takeover approach from Halliburton Co, parent company of Brown & Root International, that "may or may not lead to an offer". At yesterday's closing price, OGC is capitalised at about £70 million. The company, floated on the stock market in 1993, is 40 per cent owned by the interests of Fred Olsen, the Norwegian shipping and oil services company.

Lilleshall sells Vanplas

LILLESALL has completed its withdrawal from the building materials supply market with the sale of Vanplas to The Laird Group for £3.15 million. Vanplas distributes plastic products for the window and building markets through 14 depots. In 1995 the business contributed operating profits of £288,000 on turnover of £14.5 million. However, trading in the current year has been disappointing, which will result in a loss. The disposal gives rise to an exceptional charge of £636,000.

NSM shares suspended

SHARES of NSM, the troubled mining company, were suspended at 8p yesterday pending clarification of its financial position. The company, which on Friday revealed it was in talks with its banks regarding working capital requirements, said it was not possible to maintain an orderly market in the shares while discussions continue. NSM is negotiating the sale of parts of its business and yesterday announced the sale of Cleve Hill, a plant hire subsidiary, to a management team.

Stagecoach buy escapes reference to MMC

STAGECOACH'S proposed purchase of Porterbrook Leasing Company has escaped a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. John Taylor, Minister for Corporate and Consumer Affairs, said yesterday that he has accepted undertakings from Stagecoach that address competition concerns identified by John Bridgeman, the Director General of Fair Trading. After the acquisition, Stagecoach will own train operating companies and a rolling stock business. Mr Bridgeman raised concerns about the potential for cross-subsidies and for discrimination and breaches of confidentiality in Porterbrook's deals with other train operators.

Liffe unveils Spitalfields plan

By Jon Ashworth

PLANS to create one of the world's biggest trading floors on the site of the former Spitalfields market in east London were unveiled yesterday — but the project may remain no more than a pipe-dream. The London International Financial Futures Exchange (Liffe) is paying an undisclosed amount to secure 3.5 acres of Spitalfields, which is seeking to transform itself with a mixture of offices, shops and flats. If Liffe decides to go

ahead, it plans to build a trading floor five times the size of the current Cannon Bridge operation — itself the biggest trading floor in Europe. The Spitalfields floor would compare in size with the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT), and would be backed up by 600,000 sq ft in offices and support areas. Liffe has effectively taken an option on the site and has a couple of years in which to decide whether to proceed. Any move to Spitalfields would not take place until 2001 at the earliest. Liffe has expanded enormously in

recent years and has been anxious to clear the way for a bigger exchange, trading volumes permitting. It recently merged with the London Commodities Exchange (LCE) and is to move some operations to the old Stock Exchange floor from mid-1998. The move will double Liffe's existing capacity. Daniel Hodson, Liffe's chief executive, said the Spitalfields deal removed any long-term uncertainties over Liffe's future in the City. About 157 million futures and options contracts were traded at Liffe in the 11 months to November 30,

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Sale
Australia \$	2.19	2.03
Austria Sch	19.18	17.88
Belgium Fr	26.20	25.20
Canada \$	2.386	2.228
Cyprus Cyp£	0.815	0.780
Denmark Kr	10.46	9.86
Finland Mk	8.29	7.84
France Fr	11.33	8.48
Germany DM	2.74	2.65
Greece Dr	428	402
Hong Kong \$	13.53	12.51
Iceland Iskr	120	100
Ireland P£	1.06	0.98
Israel Sh	5.74	5.17
Italy Lira	2052	2020
Japan Yen	204.70	188.70
Malta M	2.61	2.51
Netherlands Gld	3.051	2.821
New Zealand \$	2.251	2.251
Norway Kr	11.31	10.51
Portugal Esc	271.50	253.00
S Africa Rd	8.26	7.84
Spain Pta	225.00	212.00
Sweden Kr	12.06	11.26
Switzerland Fr	2.20	2.17
Turkey Lira	184900	172900
USA \$	1.799	1.68

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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□ New Takeover Code already looks dated □ Fat fees on thin base of expertise □ Ignorance is risk

Panel beating overstretches rules

□ THERE is something seriously wrong when the fate of an important chunk of the country's infrastructure is decided by the votes attaching to a minute fraction of its shares, the manoeuvrings of overpaid advisers only concerned to keep themselves just barely within the rules and the decisions made under pressure by an unrepresentative regulator.

No one emerges with much credit on the last day of the bid for Northern Electric whichever way it goes, even if defeat for Northern looks the most likely outcome. CE Energy, the American bidder, arrived trailing accusations of junk bond financing that never entirely evaporated. They were then caught harassing Northern investors at home, a tactic that has no place in a civilised takeover bid.

As the timetable neared its end, and defeat for Northern loomed, the actions of its advisers looked more and more desperate. Barclays de Zoete Wedd and Schroders, acting for Northern, asked the Takeover Panel for permission to mop up spare Northern shares, to prevent them from being voted in favour of the bid. This is an allowed tactic; we will consider later if it is a legitimate one.

The Panel had to decide last week whether a £250,000 fee for BZW was linked to the share

purchase. The rules say it should not have been, and the Panel obviously had its doubts, because the timetable for the bid was, extraordinarily, extended by four days to allow more acceptances to arrive.

This was where it all went awry. If BZW had acted wrongly, the Panel could have said so and disallowed those purchases. Say, for the purposes of the bid, they do not exist, and CE would have had by Friday lunchtime a majority of the rest of the shares, and won. Instead, the Panel extended the timetable, which also meant success for the Americans, but by a different and less certain route.

This is the dilemma. The inevitable appeal yesterday by Northern means the Panel appeal committee had to decide who owns the company, which is not its true function. It is meant to be the judge, charged with ensuring fair play, and not the jury. On a strict analysis, if BZW acted according to the rules, Northern has won under those rules, and the bid fails.

Far better to have avoided the whole mess by banning market

purchases by either side. If institutions are stretching the rules to the limit, the rules need tightening. CE was able to buy a near-30 per cent holding in the market because some investors gambled that the bid would be thrown to the Monopolies Commission. This was not an investment decision; it was a straight bet, and a wrong one.

If bidders are not allowed to start with such a platform for a bid, then photo-finishes such as Northern's become, mathematically, less likely. The new edition of the Takeover Code has been published in the past fortnight. It already looks out of date.

Broker digs itself into a hole

□ HALF a billion in City bonuses this year, no three quarters of a billion, count it, and a billion in fees. Gosh, they must be clever, these City folk, to earn such fortunes. Worth every penny. Well, every now and then the curtain is twitched aside, and the emperor steps forward and struts his stuff.



Look at RJB Mining. This company either paid far too little for most of British Coal, or wildly overpaid. No one in the City seems quite sure, which is revealing in itself. At the end of 1994 the company paid £815 million for those coal pits. RJB had issued shares at between 250p and 340p. The shares hit a high of 625p in May; since then they have collapsed to 439p, after a 23 per cent fall one day earlier this month when the house broker, Barclays de Zoete Wedd — hi, BZW, having a good week? — cut its forecast.

Yet not a single variable, save the value of sterling which has affected every other industry in Britain, has changed since RJB bought those mines. The biggest

two factors affecting RJB's share price are and remain the world price of coal and the renegotiation of long-term contracts to supply Britain's two big fossil fuel generators by March 1998.

Opinions differ on the outcome of those negotiations. A huge chunk of the business could disappear, replaced by cheap imported coal. Against this, much of the country's generation capacity is close to RJB's fields and away from the coast, and there are physical limits to how much the generators can import.

But all this was known. Listen to *The Times* on May 30 this year and so before the shares hit that peak. "Nemesis is looming once more for Britain's coal industry. Just three years after the Government (privatised) British Coal, the corporation's new owners are wondering how to keep the much-shrunken coal industry in business."

Yet it took a note seven months later from the company's broker to correct that overblown share price. And the broker, presumably closer to the company than the rest, was so far ahead of other market forecasts up until then

because no one there had thought to take account of the importance of those contracts. Defies credibility, doesn't it?

Much the same the world over

□ THOSE seeking confirmation that abroad really is awful should look to a study on risk in emerging markets published next week by specialist analyst Merchant International Group. Taking as its starting point the axiom that, if you think education is expensive, try ignorance, the study sets out the political and economic background in over 40 emerging nations, and what can go wrong in each.

All the old favourites are here: guerrillas in Latin America, Islamic fundamentalism in Africa and Turkey, political uncertainties that mar the strong economies of Burma, China and Indonesia, organised crime in the former Soviet Union and the new democracies in Eastern Europe and violence in South Africa. And everywhere, pervasive corruption

and patronage, and expensive bureaucratic delay.

Stuart Poole-Robb, Merchant's chief executive, says information available to those venturing into emerging markets tends to be subjective. Bank research may be based on the countries' own economic data, and therefore suspect. This is putting it politely. In some markets everyone lies, from the finance ministry down.

But without succumbing too much to political correctness, one wonders how the developed world measures up. Outsiders trying to break into backwoods America can find the cards stacked against them in favour of local businesses. And anyone negotiating the corridors of Brussels might view the Russia mafia quite favourably. Once bought, at least they stay bought.

Holiday snap

□ GHOSTS of privatisation are even coming back to haunt NFC, once a goodie among the fat cats. After buses and electricity, the pensions ombudsman is to report on accusations that NFC's fund surplus was used improperly for pay-offs and holidays. If true, it would be another case of riding roughshod over trustees because Whitehall or the board knows best. Ombudsmen were not meant to notice that.

BA makes peace with Caledonian at a cost of £6m

BY MARTIN BARROW

BRITISH AIRWAYS has agreed to settle a dispute with Caledonian Airways over aircraft maintenance at a cost of £6 million.

BA has agreed to pay Caledonian Airways £1.6 million in cash and to subscribe for a new class of convertible preference shares of Inspirations, Caledonian's parent company, at a cost of £4.4 million. The company has also agreed to enhance its engineering support for Caledonian's fleet, which was acquired from British Airways

in 1995, at Gatwick and other UK airports, dedicating engineering resources specifically to Caledonian's Tristar aircraft.

The claim centred on several occasions this summer when aircraft were returned to Caledonian behind schedule after engineering work by British Airways at Gatwick disrupted the operator's charter programme.

British Airways Engineering has acknowledged that "there were occasions when engineering work had taken

longer than anticipated, but safety is paramount and neither Caledonian Airways or British Airways would ever allow safety to be compromised". British Airways said that it regarded Caledonian Airways as "a valued customer".

Inspirations claims the total cost of the aviation and maintenance disruption was about £17 million for the year to September 30. British Airways is believed to have initially offered £1 million in settlement.

The disruption took place principally in August and September. Tour operating losses in September were compounded by the adverse publicity concerning flight delays and increased capacity retained by the company after the collapse of The Flight Company.

Inspirations, whose chief executive is Vic Fatah, yesterday reported pre-tax losses of £13.19 million for the year to September 30, compared with profits of £7.7 million in the previous 12 months. Turnover rose to £403.2 million from £356.1 million.

The basic loss per share was 27.66p a share, against earnings of 18.36p. There is no final dividend, leaving a total of 0.78p a share, up from 3.5p. The shares rose 1p to 75p, against a 1996 high of 152p.

Jim Harris, the Inspirations chairman, said there had been a 47 per cent increase in winter bookings, while the summer 1997 programme is 10 per cent ahead of last year. The number of holidays available next summer has been reduced.



Vic Fatah saw Inspirations suffer heavy pre-tax losses

Eurovein sells core business for £14.8m

BY FRASER NELSON

EUROVEIN, the troubled specialist engineering company, has sold its core shock blast machinery arm to US Filter Inc for £14.8 million, some £2.5 million above the stock market value of the entire group.

The disposal will reduce Eurovein to a third of its current size, but will provide an £11.5 million war chest which the company intends to use for acquisitions to bolster its remaining components division. The new company will have assets of £16 million and will be renamed Tyzack Precision — a reversion to the firm's original name.

Its shares jumped from 55p to 76p yesterday — the highest since their post-flotation tumble from 140p to 34p two years ago. This values the company at £12.3 million.

Bill Eastwood, Eurovein's chief executive, said the disposal was prompted by the general wave of consolidation in the engineering sector. He added that while its shock blast machinery division generated two thirds of sales, it had an erratic profit record. In the six months to July 31, the division made a pre-tax profit of only £200,000 on sales of £26.7 million.

US Filter has agreed to accept £2.8 million of debt on behalf of the division, of which £650,000 will be repaid to Eurovein within two years.

Villiers, the engineering group which now owns 15 per cent of Eurovein, played down speculation that it may now make a formal bid for the company. Last month, it became Eurovein's largest shareholder after buying a further 500,000 shares worth £220,000.

Mr Eastwood said the company was not for sale.

Regent Pacific threatens legal action over expert

BY JASON NISSE

REGENT PACIFIC, the Hong Kong-based fund manager staking Hambros is threatening legal action against rival GT Management in a dispute about the hiring of a leading emerging markets investment expert.

Alan Conway, the head of overseas investment at Hambros, the pensions group, had agreed to join Regent to run its emerging markets business out of London on an annual salary believed to be in excess of £200,000.

However, just days before he was due to join, and with the announcement already made to the industry, Mr Conway said he would instead take up a similar post at GT, which is owned by Bank in Liechtenstein. Regent, run by Jim Mellon, is livid. Julian Mayo, head of the London office, said that its lawyers had

written to Mr Conway and GT saying that Regent was considering legal action for breach of contract and inducement to breach of contract.

Mr Mayo said: "I think it is rather odd for someone to sign a contract and say he is joining us and then turn round a few days later and do something completely different."

Regent, which has \$1.8 billion under management mostly in Hong Kong, is known for its aggressive action in trying to unlock the value of companies. Earlier this year it bought a 3 per cent stake in Hambros, the merchant bank, and set about putting pressure on the management team, led by Sir Chips Keswick.

Regent believes that Hambros would perform better if it sold its majority holding in Hambros Countrywide, the estate agency chain.

Move by Abell halts decline at Jourdan

BY FRASER NELSON

SHARES of Thomas Jourdan, the trouser press to DIY goods company, reversed their sharp decline yesterday on news that David Abell, the former chairman of Suter, had raised his interest in the company to 4.5 per cent.

Keith Whitten, chairman of Jourdan said yesterday that Mr Abell now owned 2.8 per cent of the shares directly, while his family and business associates have amassed a further 1.7 per cent share. The company has asked to Mr Abell to explain his motives behind the shareholding.

Jourdan's shares, which had fallen from 35p since March, rose from a low of 22p to close at 26p yesterday.

Mr Abell pocketed an estimated £10 million after Suter was sold to Ascot Holdings for £290 million. He is currently suing Ascot for £2 million in pay and bonuses that he claims should have been added to the basic £1.1 million payoff he did receive.

Thomas Jourdan's market value stood at £4.77 million at the close of trading yesterday.

Tempos, page 24

Profits warning lops 180p off Brake Brothers

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SHARES of Brake Brothers, a leading supplier of food to the catering industry, lost nearly one-quarter of their value yesterday after the company gave warning that profits would fall short of City expectations.

The shares fell 180p to 576p yesterday after Brake Brothers said that profits are set to decline due to problems at Puritan Maid, the food distribution business acquired from Forte for £7.5 million late last year.

Pre-tax profit in the year that ends on December 31 is likely to be about £24 million, the company said. This is below market expectations and substantially below the £27.1 million achieved last year.

The profit decline will interrupt a record of consistent profits growth since the company was floated ten years ago.

Puritan Maid is a multi-temperature distributor and its purchase was a shift away from Brake Brothers' traditional specialisation in frozen food distribution.

Puritan Maid's management keen to extend its client base beyond Forte and to exploit spare capacity, took on new customers but then found its facilities over-stretched, according to Frank Brake, chief executive of Brake Brothers.

The company was then forced to hire extra staff and facilities. This meant incurring "substantial one-off costs and will lead to increased operating expenses in the medium term," the company said.

Brake Brothers, which is 60 per cent family-owned, has appointed a new managing director at Puritan Maid, Roger Spicer will take over from David Baron on January 1. It is also pushing on with plans to develop a £20 million distribution centre in Birmingham, which should open early in 1998.

Tempos, page 24

Private investors lodge £100m more in unit trusts

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

PRIVATE investors pumped £409 million into unit trusts in November, an increase of more than £100 million on October, according to the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (AUIF).

For the second time in four months, net retail sales of UK growth unit trusts, which invest 80 per cent in UK companies, beat those of UK gilt and fixed interest funds, suggesting investors may be turning

to equities. Sales of UK growth funds were £6.4 million up at £108.4 million. Before July, UK gilt and fixed interest unit trusts had been the best sellers for 12 months.

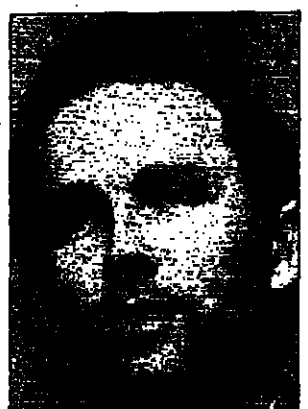
Direct advertising and company sales forces provided the bulk of the retail interest in UK growth funds, provoking concerns of potential mis-selling as the UK stock market reaches its zenith.

In contrast, the City fa-

voured overseas diversification, putting more than £128 million into international growth funds, three times the amount it put into UK growth. Overall, institutional investors bought £531 million of unit trusts.

Pep sales recovered to £309 million, after slowing in October in the aftermath of the Morgan Grenfell affair. AUIF said annual Pep sales were fast approaching £6 billion.

New team at Sunday paper



Johnson: takes control

LUKE JOHNSON, the City dealmaker who has been involved in businesses as diverse as Pizza Express and Wakehouse, has taken control of *Sunday Business*, the newspaper bought out of administration by a group of investors for £30,000 two months ago (Jason Nisse writes).

The former Kleinwort Benson media analyst takes over from Gordon Brown, the Yorkshire businessman who ploughed £128 million into the paper before buying it from the administrators. Mr

Brown ousted Tom Rubythorn, the paper's founder and original editor who is now an "editorial consultant working from home".

Mr Johnson's team is said to be ploughing "several hundreds of thousands of pounds" into the paper.

The new line-up at *Sunday Business* includes chief executive David Devoto, who worked previously for Thomson Regional Newspapers among others, and Alan McIntosh — who has worked with Mr Johnson for three years — as finance director.

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Mortgage rates for existing borrowers will change as follows:

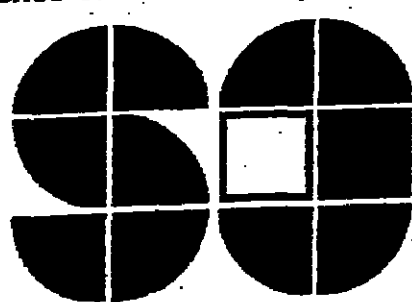
Barclays Mortgage Rate (Centrally administered mortgages). Interest charged monthly	Barclays Home Mortgage Rate (Branch based mortgages only). Interest charged quarterly
Old rate	
6.99%	6.99%
New rate	
7.25% Effective from 1st January 1997	7.25% Effective from 2nd January 1997

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Wall Street extends the festive cheer in London

SHARES on the London stock market extended their record breaking performance during the run-up to Christmas, supported by a strong bond market and a positive start to trading on Wall Street.

The FT-SE 100 index ended at its best of the day with a rise of 9.6 points to a new closing high of 4,087.2 after recovering from an early 11-point setback.

A touch of festive cheer, mixed with early speculation about possible candidates for the New Year share tips, strengthened sentiment. But end-of-year window dressing by institutions and traders combined with stock shortages to provide the real impetus.

There was little evidence of genuine retail support, with just 551 million shares changing hands by the close. Turnover is expected to show a further decline during today's shortened trading session.

Shares of bid target Northern Electric were suspended at 64p as the Takeover Panel moved to investigate the circumstances leading to BZW, the group's financial adviser, acquiring a parcel of shares before Friday's deadline for the offer.

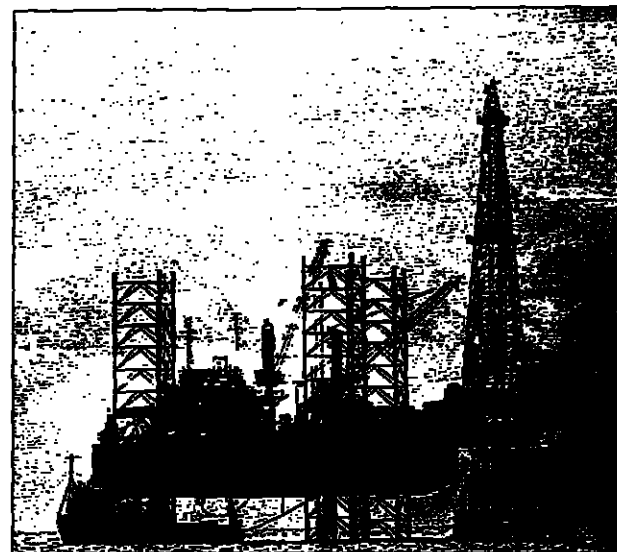
Over the weekend, the Takeover Panel extended the deadline until 1pm today after charges that BZW had accepted a fee of £250,000 for buying shares in Northern Electric, its client. CE Electric's offer valued Northern at 650p a share, or £660 million.

Meanwhile, the takeover spotlight focused firmly on Yorkshire Electricity as the price surged 26p to 798p on turnover of 888,088 shares. Dealers point out it is one of the few remaining utilities that is still independent.

Mercury Asset Management made an inauspicious debut as a constituent of the top 100 shares, with profit-taking leaving the price 15p easier at £12.36.

British Gas shrugged off some of its recent weakness to finish 5 1/2p better at 277p after confirming it is in talks with Mobil about its take-or-pay North Sea gas contracts. The two sides are renegotiating two contracts. It is expected British Gas will pay Mobil the equivalent of £285 million for lower volumes and prices in the form of assets involving the Beryl field.

Stock shortages provided a number of blue chips with



Speculators expect more oil bids and prices firmed

double-figure gains. Allied Domecq rose 14 1/2p to 439 1/2p as fewer than 4 million shares were traded, while gains were also seen in Tomkins, 11p to 267 1/2p and Zeneca, 23p to £16.49.

Confirmation that it was in talks with Littlewoods about the sale of its Freeman's mail order business enabled the shares of Sears to firm 2p to £1.05.

Signs of revival at Roxboro Group, where the share price has plummeted this year from 314p after two profit warnings. It rallied 14p to 192 1/2p yesterday, which will be good news for the acquisitive TT Group which bought 4.75 million shares, or 8.46 per cent, last month at an average price of 139p a share.

89p against the backdrop of an otherwise depressed retail sector. Elsewhere, the rest of the retailers were held back by suggestions that the build-up to Christmas had not been as lucrative as first thought. Warnings from suppliers SR Gent, unchanged at 59 1/2p, and Claremont, unchanged at 167p, served to underpin these fears.

Losses were seen in Great

Universal Stores, down 5 1/2p to 617 1/2p. Argos, 4p to 773 1/2p. Alders, 1 1/2p to 136 1/2p. Dixons, 4p to 523 1/2p. John Lewis, 6 1/2p to 547 1/2p. and Oasis Stores, 2 1/2p to 345p. But it seems Kleinwort Benson, the broker, is a buyer of Marks & Spencer, up 6 1/2p to 479p, and Next, 5 1/2p dearer at 530p.

In issuing yesterday's profits

warnings, Brake Brothers

succeeded in wiping out all the

hard effort of the previous

year, with the shares tumbling

180 1/2p to a new low of 576p,

having started the year at

650p. The group blames its

problems on losses at Puritan

Maid, the temperature control

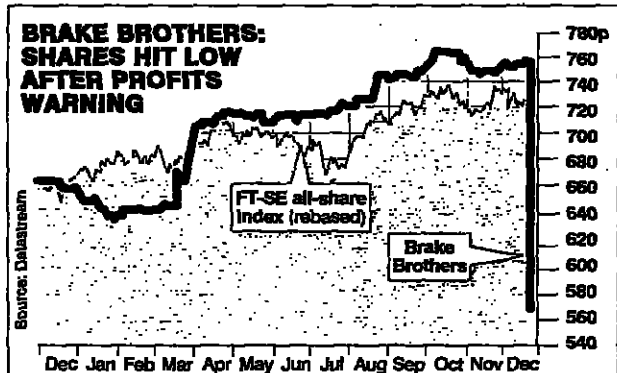
distribution business it

acquired in November last

year.

Pre-tax profits for the current

year will fall short of last



year's £27.1 million with the group forecasting around £24 million. That compares with the £29 million being forecast by most brokers.

News of a bid approach from Halliburton sent shares of OGC International, the oil services group, climbing 4 1/2p to 116p. At these levels OGC is capitalised at £70.5 million.

Only last week in the oil sector, Gulf Canada Resources launched a £432 million bid for Clyde Petroleum, 2 1/2p easier at 119p. The approach was immediately rejected by Clyde which intends to resist all moves by Gulf Canada.

City speculators now feel it is just a matter of time before other bidders emerge in the oil sector. Gains were recorded in British Petroleum, 16 1/2p to 759p, Cairn Energy, 5 1/2p to 416 1/2p, and Pecten, 4p to 46 1/2p. Lasso also rose 4p to 237p as NatWest Securities, the broker, turned bullish. It says the shares are cheap and has raised its net assets value by 5p to 209p. The broker is said to be urging clients to switch out of Enterprise, down 4p to 632 1/2p.

Shares of NSM were suspended at 8p while the group complete the disposal of several businesses, including Clee Hill Plant. Only last week the group announced it was in talks with its bankers to over immediate and long-term working capital requirements. GILF EDGED: After trading sideways for much of the day, prices received a late boost from a firm start to trading by US Treasury bonds. Gilt prices rose by up to 1p at the longer end, producing a further flattening of the yield curve.

In the futures pit, the March series of the Long Gilt put in a late spurt to finish 1 1/2p better at £109 3/4, as the total number of contracts completed slumped to 14,000, one of the lowest levels of the year.

In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 put on £1 to finish at £103 1/4, while further worries about the next rise in interest rate restricted the gains among shorter dated issues. Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was 1 1/2p firmer at £102 1/4.

NEW YORK: US shares were higher in midday in thin volume of 160 million shares traded. Technology issues fell on concern over consumer spending. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 18.07 points at 6,502.47.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	6502.47 (+18.07)
S&P Composite	748.54 (+0.33)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	Closed
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	1331.48 (+200.07)
Amsterdam:	
EOE Index	635.03 (+2.32)
Sydney:	
ASX	2380.5 (+6.7)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	2845.57 (+6.88)
Singapore:	
SEAC	2195.86 (+0.98)
Brussels:	
General	10463.81 (+13.73)
Paris:	
CAC-40	2287.44 (+8.94)
Zurich:	
SMI	831.90 (+2.30)

London:	FT 100	4087.2 (+9.6)
FT 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	
FTSE 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	
FTSE 250	2028.1 (+4.4)	
FTSE 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	
FTSE 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	
FTSE 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	
FTSE 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	
FTSE 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	
FTSE 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	
FTSE 100	4087.2 (+9.6)	

RECENT ISSUES

Advanced Power	80	- 2
Aquarius	172	- 1
Archer Dedicated	100	...
BZW Endowment Red	53	...
Centric	240	...
Colt Telecom (ZS)	291	+ 4
Crown Leisure	81	...
Dawn TII Dusk	121	...
Finbury Intl Hedge	615	...
Fountain Forestry	85	+ 1
Henderson Tech C	316	...
Hughes Systems	90	...
Kern River	187	...
Kier Group	164	...
Netcall	49	...
Oliver Ashworth	135	...
Orion	102	...
Oxford Biomedica	70	+ 1
Parkwood Holdings	79	...
Pillar Tech	55	...
Provent (125)	137	...
SDX Business Sys	172	+ 2
Scott Highland Hills	138	...
Simple Cochran	242	...
Sutton Harbour	125	...
Xenova	203	- 13
Yeoman Group	159	...

RIGHTS ISSUES

Allied Colloids n/p	8	- 4
Aurifer n/p (5)	1	...
Azlan n/p (60)	1	...
Blocomp n/p (250)	1	...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:		
Aspen Coms	120p (+21p)	
BICC	32p (+16p)	
BICC	272p (+16p)	
Tomkins	287p (+11p)	
Derwent Holdings	462p (+18p)	
REA	300p (+10p)	
TT Group	322p (+10p)	
British Borneo	789p (+18p)	
Paragon	671p (+14p)	
Alpsair	250p (+10p)	
Reylon	337p (+12p)	
FALLS:		
Dania Systems	555p (-18p)	
Powergreen	582p (-10p)	

Closing Prices Page 27

TEMPUS

Strong man needed at Sears

SEARS' confirmation yesterday that it is close to selling Freeman's to Littlewoods did nothing to help its share price, which has declined nearly 20 per cent this year. The disposal is likely to be of equally little benefit to the battered reputation of Liam Strong, chief executive of Sears.

Critics have been laying into Mr Strong since September, when he reported that Sears' interim profits were down from £30 million to just £2.5 million. The fall came after a £25 million provision was taken against exposure to the shoe shops sold to Stephen Hinchliffe's collapsed Fashio group.

The probable sale of Freeman's fails to impress not because it looks like a particularly bad deal for Sears or for investors, who are likely to get a special dividend out of it, but because it will have little or no impact on the

group's main problem, which is its shoe business.

Sears' British Shoe Corporation remains the country's biggest shoe retailer. But, despite revamps and the launch of Shoe Express and Shoe City, its poor sales continue to worry investors. The new formats are certainly not the success that Sears was looking for and that Mr Strong needed to ensure his future with the group, four years after joining from British Airways.

Mr Strong has from now until April, when he will report the company's full-year results, to convince investors that he has a clear strategy from the group and that he is the man to sort of the shoe business once and for all. To do that, he will have to achieve a lot more in the next four months than he has in the last four years.

Spirits sector

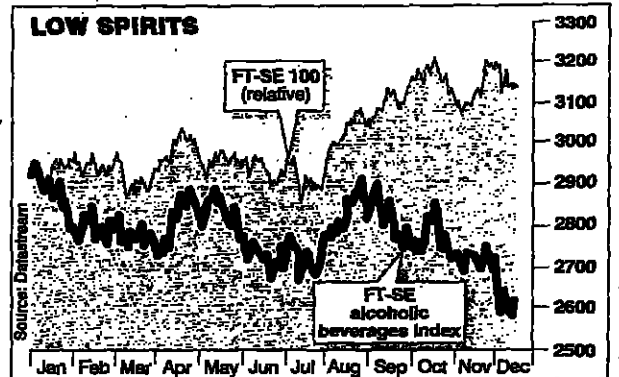
THE spirits companies will be happy to see the back of 1996. The alcoholic beverages share price index has languished below the FT-SE all year — falling about 12 per cent since January. This performance is particularly lacklustre in the context of the recovery in consumer spending on both sides of the Atlantic.

While the brewing industry has recognised that consumer attitudes have changed and innovated, introducing new products like aloeopops and nitro-keg beers, the spirits industry seems stuck in a time warp.

The spirits companies need to update their image if they are to attract the younger consumers vital for their long term future. Of the three leading spirits companies, Grand Metropolitan app-

ears to have most heeded the lessons of the aloeopop craze, introducing a swathe of experimental products including the highly successful Smirnoff Mole. GrandMet's strength in vodka, one of the few growing segments of the spirit markets, is a distinct advantage over its two rivals. Guinness, too, is reliant on the less fashionable brown

spirits, while Allied Domecq's portfolio still looks too weak, despite its strong presence in tequila. The spirits industry could benefit from a round of consolidation and brand rationalisation. But with all the big companies committed to preserving their existing diversified states the sector is set for another year of stalemate.



Brake Brothers

BY THE company's own admission, Brake Brothers' problems are because of poor management of expansion. After buying the Puritan Maid multi-temperature distribution business from Forte at the end of last year, Brake Brothers was keen to use some spare distribution capacity to build up a client base so that it did not just rely on Forte.

After adding companies like Bass, however, it found that Puritan Maid's capacity was exhausted very quickly. That meant hiring extra staff and facilities, pushing costs sky-high. The result, not surprisingly, is that Puritan Maid will make a loss of around £4.5 million this year.

Diversifying from frozen into multi-temperature distribution was a sound move because it is what an increasing number of clients want. And although at considerable cost the company has managed to keep its new Puritan

Maid clients happy. The company is now building the facilities to handle the expanded business and it has appointed new managers at the subsidiary. However, it does not expect profits from Puritan Maid for more than one year. Its shares should be treated with caution until those profits are clearly on their way.

Thomas Jourdan

BY NETTING around £10 million from the sale of Suter, David Abell proved his ability to pick winners. While his decision to buy into Thomas Jourdan may well prove a prelude to greater plans, it also serves as a signal that the company's shares have fallen too far.

On a trading basis, Jourdan itself bottomed out two years ago. It broke into profit last year, and markets have picked up since. The market for its well-known Corby

trouser series has strengthened as orders come flooding back from hotels and the presses are shipped out to Japan. Prospects at its fire surroundings division are increasing with the recovery in the housing market, and the launch of new fire products should stoke the division's progress next year.

Its giftware division, which supplies Marks & Spencer, has recently linked up with Boots. Profits from this venture are due in the next set of results.

Any company which can turn profits out of a Floating Hippo Soap Dish deserves a fair hearing. But Jourdan's shares have tumbled just as its markets have picked up. On a ratio of 15.4 times, its shares seem good value if the recovery continues. Indeed, with a market value of £4.77 million, Thomas Jourdan itself may rank as a nice speculative investment for ambitious businessmen with £10 million to spend.

COMMODITIES

LIFE			
Dec	2000	2001	2002
Jan	2000	2001	2002
Feb	2000	2001	2002
Mar	2000	2001	2002
Apr	2000	2001	2002
May	2000	2001	2002
Jun	2000	2001	2002
Jul	2000	2001	2002
Aug	2000	2001	2002
Sep	2000	2001	2002
Oct	2000	2001	2002
Nov	2000	2001	2002
Dec	2000	2001	2002

LIFE OPTIONS

LIFE			
Dec	2000	2001	2002
Jan	2000	2001	2002
Feb	2000	2001	2002
Mar	2000	2001	2002
Apr	2000	2001	2002
May	2000	2001	2002
Jun	2000	2001	2002
Jul	2000	2001	2002
Aug	2000	2001	2002
Sep	2000	2001	2002
Oct	2000	2001	2002
Nov	2000	2001	2002
Dec	2000	2001	2002

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

FTSE 100			
Dec	2000	2001	2002
Jan	2000	2001	2002
Feb	2000	2001	2002
Mar	2000	2001	2002
Apr	2000	2001	2002
May	2000	2001	2002
Jun	2000	2001	2002
Jul	2000	2001	2002
Aug	2000	2001	2002
Sep	2000	2001	2002
Oct	2000	2001	2002
Nov	2000	2001	2002
Dec	2000	2001	2002

MONEY RATES (%)

MONEY RATES (%)			
Dec	2000	2001	2002
Jan	2000	2001	2002
Feb	2000	2001	2002
Mar	2000	2001	2002
Apr	2000	2001	2002
May	2000	2001	2002
Jun	2000	2001	2002
Jul	2000	2001	2002
Aug	2000	2001	2002
Sep	2000	2001	2002
Oct	2000	2001	2002
Nov	2000	2001	2002
Dec	2000	2001	2002

DOLLAR RATES

DOLLAR RATES			
Dec	2000	2001	2002
Jan	2000	2001	2002
Feb	2000	2001	2002
Mar	2000	2001	2002
Apr	2000	2001	2002
May	2000	2001	2002
Jun	2000	2001	2002
Jul	2000	2001	2002
Aug	2000	2001	2002
Sep	2000	2001	2002
Oct	2000	2001	2002
Nov	2000	2001	2002
Dec	2000	2001	2002

OTHER STERLING

OTHER STERLING			
Dec	2000	2001	2002
Jan	2000	2001	2002
Feb	2000	2001	2002
Mar	2000	2001	2002
Apr	2000	2001	2002
May	2000	2001	2002
Jun	2000	2001	2002
Jul	2000	2001	2002
Aug	2000	2001	2002
Sep	2000	2001	2002
Oct	2000	2001	2002
Nov	2000	2001	2002
Dec	2000	2001	2002

FTSE VOLUMES

FTSE VOLUMES			
Dec	2000	2001	2002
Jan	2000	2001	2002
Feb	2000	2001	2002
Mar	2000	2001	2002
Apr	2000	2001	2002
May	2000	2001	2002
Jun	2000	2001	2002
Jul	2000	2001	2002
Aug	2000	2001	2002
Sep	2000	2001	2002
Oct	2000	2001	2002
Nov	2000	2001	2002
Dec	2000	2001	20

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Recipe for trouble

TUCKED away in Anthony Worrall-Thompson's stack of Christmas mail is a letter that could turn the celebrity chef's turkey green. The board of Baldwin, the leisure group that bought Simpsons of Cornwall in December 1992, has written to the headstrong managing director of Simpsons, asking him to account for some of his more curious spending sprees. According to Sandy Singh, chief executive, it is about "certain ordering without authorisation".

Free launch?

DESPITE losing £30,000 in unpaid fees for work on the launch in April, MacLaurin Communications, the PR company, has agreed to take on the relaunch of the ailing Sunday Business. Brian MacLaurin, the PR firm's boss, is clearly taking a more sanguine view. Only a few weeks ago, he was telling anyone who would listen that he wanted to call in heaves to help to recover the money.

STILL on the subject of PR, does anyone know who is acting for Brunelcliffe Aggregates, the troubled group under threat from rivals Bardon? After using Ian James, the larger-than-life publicist, it moved to College Hill, which was fired last week in favour of Citigate, but no one told College Hill until yesterday.

Good vintage

OVER from Vienna, William de Gelsey celebrated his 75th birthday last week in Brook's Club. Sir Andrew Large, SIB chairman, Lord Swaythling, chairman of Rothmans International, and Sir John Craven, chairman of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, were among his distinguished guests. They drank a toast to the senior adviser to Creditanstalt with a glass of Royal Tokay Aszu. "The wine of kings and king of wines", according to Hungarian-born de Gelsey.



A CURIOUS invitation from the Cambridge Political Economy Society and Oxford University Press. The age-old institutions have joined forces to produce the Cambridge Journal of Economics, in spite of years of rivalry between the two universities. A CJE spokesman said: "The decision was not made on sentimental grounds."

Winning number

CELLNET, the mobile phone company, is issuing a challenge to find the UK's busiest business card — the one bearing the most contact numbers. Richard Vaughan-Davies, a gentleman's outfitter in North Wales, currently leads with a staggering nine contact numbers. The national winner will receive £1,000 and free use of Cellnet's personal assistant service, which offers one point of contact for people with plenty of numbers.

SPARE a thought for John Burke, chief executive of Bristol & West Building Society, and pray that it doesn't snow. This is his family's first Christmas in their newly converted farmhouse on the outskirts of Bristol — and the Aga isn't working.

MORAG PRESTON

Umbro puts its shirt on the loyalty of football followers

Jason Njssé and
Chris Ayres on
rising competition
among makers of
replica soccer kit

More than a million children and adults will receive presents of team football shirts tomorrow. This year will go down as the best ever for an industry that has grown beyond all recognition in the 1990s and is now reckoned to have an annual turnover of more than £500 million. At the centre of it all is a small Cheshire-based company whose name brings out affection and loathing in equal measure, Umbro.

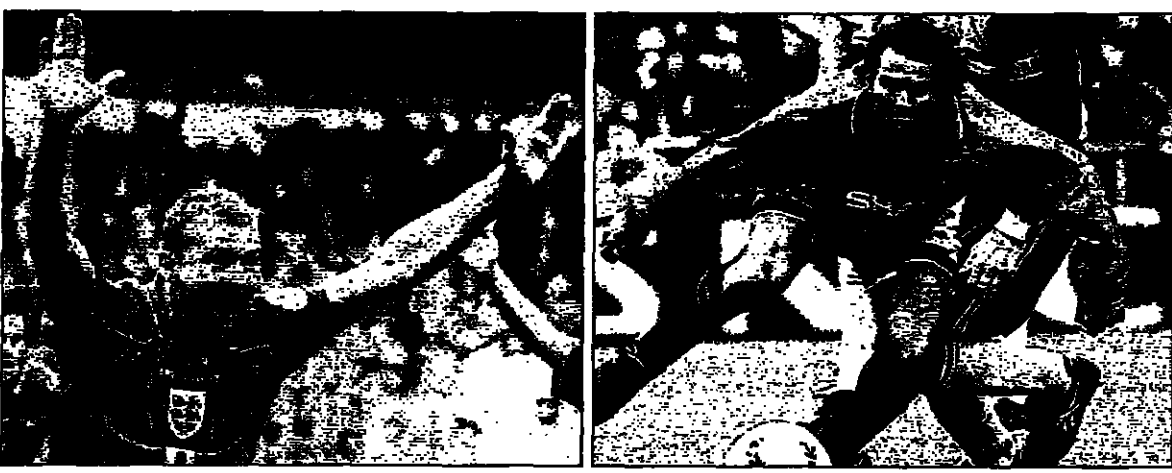
Umbro makes the most successful replica team strip in the world — Manchester United. In spite of a recent deal in which Nike lured the Brazil team from Umbro for \$200 million, with a guarantee of another \$200 million to be spent on promotions, United leads the industry, outselling the likes of Barcelona, Juventus and Bayern Munich. Every new United shirt sells in its hundreds of thousands and the latest home and away shirts, introduced controversially at the start of this season, are outselling their nearest rivals in the high street, Liverpool (made by Reebok) and Arsenal (Nike), by nearly two to one.

Steve Preston, chief executive of Umbro Europe, says that the firm has yet to have a million-selling shirt, but the current United strip could be the first. That is why United makes more than £30 million a year from merchandising and Umbro recently renewed its deal with the club, paying a reputed £80 million over five years.

Yet just four years ago, Umbro was near collapse. The Humphreys family, who founded it in 1924 (Umbro is short for Humphreys Brothers) had been making team strips since the 1930s, when they signed a deal with Manchester City. It made all bar one of the kits for the 1966 World Cup, but branded products did not break through until the 1970s, with Admiral's deal with England being one of the first. Umbro, run from Wythenshaw, south of Manchester, had sold the US distribution rights to an underwear maker in South Carolina, called Stone Manufacturing. In 1992, Stone said that it would buy the whole of Umbro for £2.9 million, and the Humphreys could not sign fast enough.

Around the same time, it was decided to concentrate on football. Preston says: "The decision was taken because the increased cost of sponsorship meant a small company like us could not be in multi-sports. We decided there was enough of a market in football for us to go for, and no one knew more about our sport than us."

The strategy worked. In 1993, Umbro had turnover of just £61.9 million and made losses of £494,000. But by 1995, sales had grown to £109 million and the business made a taxable profit of £14.4 million. Industry experts reckon that sales could reach £150 million this year, though stiff competition from the likes of Nike,



Steve Preston, top, with Alan Shearer, England's captain, above left, and Ryan Giggs of Manchester United

Adidas and Reebok mean that profits will be about the same.

There is heavy speculation that Umbro may float in 1997, and could have a market value of more than £250 million. Preston does not play down this speculation, but defers to the US headquarters. There, Jim Foster, the director of corporate strategy, said: "There are many ways of bringing capital into a growing business and an IPO [American for flotation] is among many things we are looking at."

Yet, with this success, come accusations of exploitation. A recent survey of football fans found that a third thought that their clubs were trying to rip them off. Sheila Spiers, of the Football Supporters Association, says: "Clubs are changing their strips simply to milk the markets. They sell more strips when they change the design. Most of the kits are sold in extra-large size, which means adults are buying them as fashion items. It would be a good idea if clubs sold the smaller-sized kits cheaper for the kids."

Chris Evans, the Radio 1 disc jockey, started a campaign against United and Umbro when the previous away strip was ditched because the players said that they found that its grey colour made team-mates blend into the crowd. This led Umbro to bring out the new white strip at a reduced price.

The Football Association's head of

marketing, Phil Carling, was subjected to a roasting on a live radio show presented by David Mellor, the former Cabinet Minister, after it was announced that the England team was bringing out a new strip after Christmas, replacing the shirts worn for the Euro 96 championships. And who makes the England strip (as well as Scotland, Ireland, Everton, Chelsea, Nottingham Forest, Manchester City, Celtic, Aberdeen, Inter Milan and Lazio, to name but a few)? Umbro.

Preston throws up his hands at the mention of England. "We were under enormous pressure to change the Euro 96 away strip to red," he says. The old strip was officially described as indigo, but, in truth, was grey. England's final appearance in it was the semi-final defeat by Germany. The FA has vowed that the new kit will last until 1999, taking it past the World Cup in France.

"We're now making sure that all the shirts have a definite time limit on them so people can see we're being open about it," said an FA official. "But for the pricing and the wear you get out of a shirt, we think two years is quite a long time."

Umbro works on the basis of signing a club for five years. It believes in changing at least one of the strips each year — most clubs have two official

strips, but some, like United, have had three. Umbro will pay a big fee to clubs in the form of a guaranteed payment and a royalty on top.

Deals in Europe are also coming thick and fast, although the market lags the UK. "This is a more mature market, with a bigger customer base for kit," says Preston. "We are leading the world."

However, the price is soaring. Umbro's success has brought stiff competition from other manufacturers. The emergence of Nike, which signed first the striker Ian Wright and then the whole of the Arsenal team, has made replica shirts an expensive business.

"Nike aims to become as dominant in this sport as they are in other sports," says Preston. "They are buying a dominant place in the industry."

Prices are now so high that Preston admits that it is almost impossible to make money on new replica shirt contracts. However, the manufacturers take the view that they are promoting their own brand, which is why you see television adverts apparently pushing Newcastle United, but actually paid for by their kit makers, Adidas.

However, Preston is fairly sanguine about the toughness of the marketplace. "Competition is healthy," he says. "It helps Umbro that we are not the sole spreaders of the gospel according to football."



ANATOLE KALETSKY

The way of all monopolies

When! The Christmas shopping is over. You have slumped into favourite armchair. You are heaving a sigh of relief when suddenly you remember: the true ordeal begins on Boxing Day. Buying computerised gizmos for your children (or perhaps even yourself) is the easy part. The hard part — the impossible, maddening, blood-boiling, brain-roasting, apoplectic assault on your serenity and self-respect — is making the damn things work.

Why does nothing involving personal computers ever seem to work first time? Why is it that when you load your child's new CD-Rom on Boxing Day your computer will respond with the familiar helpful suggestions: "Error Reading Drive D" or "Insufficient Memory" or "General Failure Error — Abort, Retry, Ignore?" Computers today are at the stage of industrial development that cars reached in the 1950s: every driver had to be his own mechanic and it was taken for granted that even a Rolls-Royce would break down on a long trip. Yet the computer business shows no sign of even trying to give consumers what they have come to expect from every other industry: an appliance that is cheap, easy to use and, above all, trouble-free.

Don't worry. I am not about to compose an elegy for the quill pen. I quite like computers and have three of them in my home. It is precisely because I use computers so much that they make me so angry. What makes me especially angry is the way that two companies — Microsoft and Intel — have exploited the ignorance of consumers to keep these machines expensive and needlessly complex.

The main objective for both Intel and Microsoft is not to make computers cheaper and more reliable. It is to stop the operating heart of the PC becoming a "commodity product", which would allow other companies to compete and bring the price down.

By marketing new generations of microprocessors and operating systems, these companies have managed to keep the price of computers from falling below \$2,000 to \$3,000, despite the phenomenal reductions made in production costs. Of course, today's computers can perform tasks inconceivable on those sold a few years ago. But do consumers want or even understand these capabilities?

If you want a computer for writing, analysing spreadsheets or using the Internet, the bells and whistles provided by each new generation of machine are not just redundant. They are often counterproductive, making these machines more complicated, less reliable and slower to use, despite their allegedly faster processing speeds.

Two years ago, I put this complaint to a man who could do something about it — Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft. Mr Gates, responded with his familiar smirk: "You're probably the sort of guy who still uses an old 286 machine you bought ten years ago."

In this, as in many other things, Mr Gates was absolutely right. (You can't be wrong about everything and become the richest man in the world.) But his old-fashioned response did not address the fundamental flaw in his company's strategy.

Emerson said that "if a man make a better mousetrap, the whole world will beat a path to his door". By proving Emerson wrong, Mr Gates has become richer than the Rockefeller, who monopolised the great growth industry of their era. But when your children call you to fix the crash caused by Microsoft's Encarta running on Microsoft's Windows while Microsoft's Excel was working in the background, reflect on this: Microsoft's shares have trebled in the past two years. IBM's shares trebled in the two years from 1981 to 1983, when it invented the personal computer.

One day somebody will do to Microsoft and Intel what these companies did to IBM. They will make a functional computer that costs less than Mr Gates charges for his Windows operating system alone. Microsoft and Intel will go the way of other monopolists. And my brain will stop suffering from Boxing Day short-circuits when I see "General Failure Error — Abort, Retry, Ignore."

BUSINESS LETTERS

Act places burden on small business

From Mrs Barbara Roche, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green (Labour)

Sir, Ann Widdecombe claims that employers will not be expected to act as immigration officers under her Asylum Act ("Firms face big fine for each illegal worker", December 4). She goes on to say that employers will not have to make checks on potential employees' documents, but admits that if checks are not made there will be no statutory defence to the criminal charge.

What kind of fairy tale world is this minister living in?

Britain's small firms have enough to contend with, without the extra burdens imposed by this Act. Michael Heseltine admitted to me in a Parliamentary Answer recently that this Bill will cost them over £12 million in the first year alone. The Federation of Small Businesses stated in July that they "do not believe that it is the job of the employer to make checks on immigration status and maintain that such a proposal will prove unworkable irrespective of the so-called light regulatory touch promised by ministers".

Labour agrees. We opposed these measures when they came before the House and Jack Straw has made it clear that we will not operate them in government. Britain's small firms deserve a fair deal, it is the next Labour government who will be lifting burdens from them.

Yours faithfully,
BARBARA ROCHE
(Shadow Small Business Minister),
House of Commons, SW1.

Fraudulent insurance claims cost honest policyholders

From Mr Piero Chiodo

Sir, Your article "Insurers join in weather study" (November 29) highlights that around 3,000 people a year attempt to obtain detailed weather information in order to make fraudulent damage claims.

Last year, fraudulent insurance claims totalled some £380 million and it is thought that honest policyholders are paying as much as 4 per cent extra for their policies because of this problem.

Sadly, many customers perceive insurance fraud as being fair. Research conducted by the Centre for the Study of Public Order based at the

University of Leicester found that 25 per cent of 600 householders questioned thought that there was nothing wrong in increasing the amount of an insurance claim to cover the cost of the excess. A further 15 per cent thought it was acceptable to exaggerate a claim to cover both the excess and additional money.

In order for insurance companies to handle claims effectively, investments in prevention of claims, better customer services (fast and fair settlement), customer profiling, risk management, claims shared information and fraud detection are critical. Information technology

and network computing are essential in tackling these tasks.

The future of the industry is dependent on delivering cost-effective products and services to its customers. Only when the industry succeeds in dealing with fraud effectively will policyholders see the benefit of reduced premiums and insurers improved profits.

Yours faithfully,
PIERO CHIODO,
Manager, Claims Solutions,
IBM Insurance UK,
New Square,
Bedfont Lakes,
Feltham,
Middlesex.

Conveyancing profit projection proves intriguing to legal profession

From Mr G. K. C. Chapman

Sir, I was interested to read the two articles in the Business Section of December 4 relating to Hambro Countrywide offering conveyancing services. Apart from the statement that all delays are as a result of solicitors moving at "snail's pace" to which I, and I am sure the remainder of the profession, will take justifiable exception, I was intrigued to note the projected profits of £10,000,000

over a three-year period. I believe that most solicitors would be reasonably satisfied with a profit of 25 per cent.

Thus, to achieve a profit of £10,000,000 would require a turnover of £40,000,000 which does not allow for any set-up costs. At an average cost per conveyance of between £250 and £300, this will require approximately 145,000 conveyances in the three-year period or almost 50,000 trans-

actions per annum. This would require each fee earner to carry out approximately 485 completed conveyancing transactions per annum to achieve the required fee income of £133,000 per fee earner. I believe it to be generally accepted that to conclude a conveyancing transaction from start to finish will take a minimum of six hours. This would require each fee earner to work almost 3,000 hours per annum.

Within the profession, it is generally accepted that anything over 1,200 chargeable hours is reasonable. Would Mr Hill be kind enough to let me know where I can recruit staff who would be prepared to put in such hours? It seems likely that, with these hours, it would not be long before any such staff were unable to work at all, let alone with the relative alacrity of the snail's pace.

Yours faithfully,
G. K. C. CHAPMAN,
60 Commercial Road,
Paddock Wood,
Tonbridge, Kent.

Meter reading for the gasman

From Om P. Midha

Sir, My lifelong observance of the maxim "neither a borrower nor a lender be" is being undermined by British Gas, leading to the conclusion that privatisation can be a contributory factor to the occurrence of insanity.

My meter was last read on 18.11.95, and after repeated reminders by me a bill was sent on 08.03.96. Again, after providing my own reading by a number of telephone calls, a bill was provided on 04.07.96. As before, it took numerous requests compiled with up-date reading to acquire a bill on 16.11.96.

It will be nice to welcome a meter-reader.

Yours faithfully,
OM P. MIDHA,
1 Woodbine Avenue,
Gosforth,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

Pessimistic media

From Mr Richard Dale

Sir, Why is it that all economic news is portrayed as negative? For instance, when interest rates go up the headline is "borrowers hit by higher rates", when interest rates go down the headline is "savers hit by lower rates". Whatever happens, you invariably emphasise the downside, thus creating a distorted view in the minds of more impressionable readers. It is the media that encourages generally pessimistic views on news matters, usually blaming the Government for all so-called "bad" news.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD DALE,
Spring Cottage,
64 Friday Street,
Warrnam, West Sussex.

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2

Modest gains in thin trading

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	997	996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[illegible][illegible]

When hearsay is admissible

In re Rahman

Before Lord Justice Staughton, Lord Justice Hoffmann and Lord Justice Hutton

[Judgment December 11]

In deciding whether a person was an illegal entrant, the court was not limited to considering evidence which was admissible at common law and was entitled to take into account hearsay.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment in an appeal brought by the entrant, Saudur Rahman, from the refusal by Mr Justice Collins on June 26, 1996 to grant him a writ of habeas corpus.

The Court of Appeal unanimously dismissed the appeal on a point of law as to whether certain evidence relied upon by the Home Secretary was admissible. A majority of the court (Lord Justice Hoffmann dissenting) also dismissed the appeal on a point of fact that there was sufficient evidence to conclude that the entrant was an illegal immigrant.

Mr Michael Shrimpton for the entrant; Mr Mark Shaw for the Secretary of State.

LORD JUSTICE HUTTON said that the entrant had sought to challenge the legality of his detention as an illegal entrant pursuant to paragraph 16 of Schedule 2 to the Immigration Act 1971.

The entrant claimed to be the son of Abdus Somad and his wife Monjia Bibi and to have been born in Bangladesh on July 28, 1967. Abdus Somad, by virtue of his registration in 1965 as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, enjoyed British citizenship and, in 1969, was living in the United Kingdom.

On May 29, 1989, the entrant, who had expressed the wish to join his alleged parents, was interviewed by an entry clearance officer at the British High Commission in Dhaka and was granted a certificate of entitlement to the right of abode in the United Kingdom where he arrived in 1989. He obtained a British passport on November 30, 1990.

In January 1991 the entrant returned to Bangladesh. On April 7, 1991 his wife, Rina Akhter, and a boy named Rone Ahmed whom she represented to be the child of herself and the entrant, applied for a certificate of entitlement to join the entrant in the United Kingdom.

On November 4, Rina Akhter gave birth to a boy, Jone Ahmed, and he was added to the application.

The entrant returned to the United Kingdom. While Rina's application was still pending the Secretary of State received a denuncatory letter claiming that the boy Rone was not the entrant's son and that the entrant was not the son of Rina's sister and that the entrant was not whom he claimed to be but a man named Mohammed Sarab Ali Talukder. A second denuncatory letter also asserted that the entrant was not the son of Abdus Somad.

The Secretary of State, through entry clearance officers in Bangladesh, instituted inquiries about the entrant in two villages. It was common ground that the evidence, if presented in an admissible form and uncontradicted, was such as could justify the conclusion that deception had been established to the requisite standard.

It was also common ground that unless at least some of the village visits evidence was taken into account, there was not sufficient evidence to support that conclusion.

The question to which the first issue gave rise was whether the entrant was obliged to inquire into the truth of a question of fact on which an administrative decision had been based, was entitled to look at all the material on which the decision-maker legitimately relied or whether it was confined to considering such evidence as was presented in strictly admissible form.

Mr Justice Collins had admitted evidence of the village visits and in particular of interviews tendered by means of affidavits from immigration officers. Mr Shrimpton argued that all of that evidence was inadmissible, because it was hearsay and would be inadmissible in legal proceedings in this country.

In his Lordship's judgment the answer was to be found in the speeches of the House of Lords in *R v Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte Khawaja* ([1984] AC 74, 100). The speech of Lord Wilberforce there was entirely consistent with the contentions of the Secretary of State in the present case and the decision of Mr Justice Collins. Accordingly the disputed evidence was rightly admitted.

The second question for the court was whether their Lordships were satisfied that the entrant was an illegal entrant. His Lordship found the question difficult one but found himself differing in the end from Mr Justice Collins and found that it was impossible to say that the evidence as a whole was sufficiently convincing to satisfy the stringent burden of proof which the Secretary of State had to satisfy. Accordingly on the second issue his Lordship would allow the appeal and quash the order for detention.

LORD JUSTICE HOFFMANN said that the entrant was detained following a declaration by an immigration officer that the entrant was illegal. The entrant applied for a writ of habeas corpus requiring the Secretary of State to release him and commenced proceedings for judicial review of the decision that he was an illegal entrant.

Mr Justice Clarke directed, inter alia, that the judicial review application should stand withdrawn. That assumed that the entrant would continue to be detained in custody. However, he was granted temporary admission and was released.

It would therefore have been

more satisfactory and more accurate if the proceedings by way of judicial review had been reinstated and the habeas corpus application had been treated as spent.

However, that did not occur and on appeal the proceedings were treated formally as applications for a writ of habeas corpus. While his Lordship considered that that was unfortunate procedurally it had not affected the substance of the points which had to be considered.

It was common ground that the governing authority was *Khawaja* and that where the Secretary of State sought to declare a person an illegal entrant, he had to prove that he was in fact an illegal entrant.

Mr Shrimpton argued that the decision in *Khawaja* required that different rules of admissibility had to be applied once the decision of the Secretary of State was challenged.

His Lordship did not accept that submission. The test of the admissibility of evidence was not different in the case of a challenge to the decision of the Secretary of State than it was in the case of a challenge to the decision of a court.

On the second factual issue, in his Lordship's assessment, the evidence of the village visits was so strong that one had to conclude that the entrant was not the natural son of Abdus Somad and that the contrary evidence did not suffice to displace that conclusion.

Lord Justice Staughton delivered a judgment concurring with Lord Justice Hoffmann.

Solicitors: Saf Awad, Luton; Treasury Solicitor.

Financial prejudice not established

Novelli SpA v Watkins

Before Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Millett and Lord Justice Potter

[Judgment November 26]

In the absence of special circumstances, the need for insurers or other commercial organisations to make provision against an outstanding legal claim did not amount to financial prejudice which justified the striking out of the claim if there was inordinate and inexcusable delay in its prosecution.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment allowing an appeal by the plaintiffs, Novelli SpA, against the decision of Mr Justice Goff on July 21, 1995 to dismiss their action against the defendant representative Lloyd's underwriter, Mark Christopher Watkins, for want of prosecution.

The plaintiffs issued their writ, claiming payment under a policy of marine insurance, in June 1993, three months before the expiry of the limitation period. The facts were served on the defendant in July 1993.

The judge found that, thereafter, there was a 15-month period of inordinate and inexcusable delay on the part of the plaintiffs which had caused the insurers more than minimal prejudice by reason of the extended period during which they had to reserve in their books their proportion of the uninsured loss.

Miss Barbara Dohmann, QC, and Mr Ian Mill for the plaintiffs; Mr Timothy Young, QC, for the insurers.

LORD JUSTICE POTTER said that the only evidence of financial prejudice to the insurers was contained in their solicitor's affidavit.

"The amount of the reserve for the claim has to remain in the underwriters' books and as such the substantial amount of money in issue in the case has been unavailable for the amortisation of losses or the distribution of profits so far as the individual syndicates and their members are concerned. Thus the amount of the claim, plus contingencies for interest and costs, are tied up with the inevitable problems of cash flow, which are currently notorious in the market."

Such a generalised assertion of prejudice in relation to cash flow warranted further examination.

Looking aside for a moment the precise means by which the claim against the defendant Lloyd's syndicate, an insured commercial organisation, faced with a legal claim which was not obviously doomed to fail, would make provision in its books for an amount less than the amount of the claim, the judge's finding that it was likely to have to pay in damages and costs if the claim was successful.

Such a provision was no more than an accounting entry which was reflected in the profit and loss account for the year in which the provision was first made, and which was then carried into the balance sheet.

If the claim was disposed of for an amount less than the amount of the provision, the difference would be reflected in the profit and loss account for the year in which the provision was released and would again be carried into the balance sheet.

The effect would be to reduce the trading profit, or increase the

trading loss, for the year in which the provision was made and increase the trading profit, or reduce the trading loss, in the year in which it was released. In the meantime the balance sheet would show an increase in the reserves to meet outstanding liabilities.

Nonetheless, the reserves were merely an accounting entry. It was not necessary to put cash aside to meet the claim, although it might be necessary to estimate when the claim would become due for payment and to ensure that there would then be cash to meet it. In the meantime, however, cash flow was not affected.

If there was a financial detriment, it was a consequence of the claim, not of the claimant's delay in prosecuting it, for provision had to be made when the claim was received, not when proceedings were commenced.

The ability to pay dividends might be affected in the year in which the provision was made. The only effect of subsequent delay in the prosecution of the claim was that the outstanding liability would be carried in the balance sheet for a longer period. However, the profit and loss account, and the ability to pay dividends, in later years would be unaffected.

Accordingly, delay in the prosecution of proceedings would normally (i) not affect the defendant's cash flow and (ii) not affect its profits or ability to pay dividends but (iii) would prolong the period during which it was obliged to carry a lower figure for net assets in its balance sheet.

In the case of a syndicate at Lloyd's, the provision would be made at or soon after the time

when the claim was first notified. If not released during the three-year period for which the accounts were made up, it would increase the annual reinsurance to close and reduce the profits distributable to, or increase the losses borne by, names on the syndicate in the year when the claim was notified.

Subsequent delay in the prosecution of the claim would not affect names in later years at all, since they would have the benefit of the reserves carried forward at the expense of the former names.

Thus, the need to make provision against claims applied to any commercial organisation, whether or not carrying on an insurance business, although, in the case of insurers, prudent reservation was quintessentially an ordinary incident of their business and accounting procedures. In principle the same was true of any individual defendant, who must mentally at least put aside a sum to meet the claim.

So, in the absence of evidence of special circumstances showing that the defendant had sustained or been exposed to a particular and significant loss due to the continued existence of the contingent liability during the period of culpable delay, presumed loss could not be properly regarded as financial prejudice for the purpose of the rule under discussion.

Accordingly, there was no evidence upon which the judge could properly have held that the necessary financial prejudice had been established.

The Master of the Rolls and Lord Justice Millett agreed.

Solicitors: Clintons; Middleton Potts.

Plaintiff failed to intervene

Corporacion Nacional del Cobre de Chile v Sogemin Metals Ltd and Others

Before Mr Justice Carnwath

[Judgment November 18]

In an action based on the alleged bribery of the plaintiffs' employee by the defendants, neither in law nor in equity did the defendants' liability fail to be extinguished or reduced if it was shown that the plaintiffs had had the opportunity to discover and investigate the alleged bribery but had failed to do so.

Mr Justice Carnwath so held in the Chancery Division when allowing a motion by the plaintiffs, Corporacion Nacional del Cobre de Chile ("Codelco"), to strike out part of the defence of Sogemin Metals Ltd, Sogemin Metals Inc, Mr David A. Davis and Mr Paul Tweedie Risco.

Mr Ian Geering, QC, and Mr Anthony de Gaur Robinson for the plaintiffs; Mr Charles Falconer, QC, and Miss Roxanne Ismail for the first three defendants.

MR JUSTICE CARNWATH said that Codelco was owned by the Republic of Chile. It was the largest copper producer in the world and was a substantial trader in metal futures.

The first defendant was a United Kingdom based commodity broker which did business with Codelco between 1989 and 1994. The second defendant was an associated United States company and the third defendant was an employee of the second defendant. The fourth defendant had not entered an appearance.

Codelco claimed that the defendants were party to a conspiracy to bribe Mr Juan Pablo Davila, the alleged Codelco futures department employee, to make payments via its representatives in Chile, to enter into a number of contracts and to do so on "unfavourable or off-market terms and/or terms which included commissions or unnecessary commissions or charges".

The defendants admitted having made payments to representatives in Chile, but denied that it was party to or had knowledge of any bribery. They denied the contracts were unfavourable or off-market or included such commissions or charges.

In law the plaintiffs made a restitutionary claim in respect of the value of the bribes and sought damages for fraud, conspiracy and procuring breach of contract.

In equity they claimed that the defendants were liable to account to them for the payments as constructive trustees, and also for profits made on the contracts. They relied on the defendants' alleged "dishonest" assistance in breach of trust.

Before it could be decided fairly whether part of the defence disclosed a valid defence, it was necessary to work out what precisely it meant. The defendants could not improve their position by a smokescreen of obscurity.

What the paragraphs in the defence came down to was a plea that simply because officers and employees of Codelco were aware of the relationship between Sogemin and Codelco, and Mr Davila's trading was overseen by a

committee within Codelco, Codelco was at least partly responsible for its own losses.

In effect they said that Codelco had the opportunity to investigate and failed to do so but that they were put on notice in any way of any irregularity.

The plaintiffs submitted that such an assertion did not add up to a defence to a claim based on fraud, whether at law or in equity. They relied principally on the judgment of Mr Justice Mummery in *Alliance and Leicester Building Society v Edgestow Ltd* ([1993] 1 WLR 1462) where he had held that contributory negligence was not a defence to deceit.

His Lordship said that that was a fully argued and consistent judgment and it would not be appropriate to depart from it.

In *Gran Gelato Ltd v Richfield (Group) Ltd* ([1992] Ch 560) contributory negligence was held to be in principle available as a defence to a claim under the Misrepresentation Act 1967.

But his Lordship agreed with Mr Justice Mummery in the *Alliance and Leicester* case that the decision in the *Gelato* case raised an analogy with negligence and not with deceit, and in respect of deceit, or the principle of "carelessness in not making inquiries provides no answer to a claim that the plaintiff has done that which the representor intended that he should do".

In regard to the claim in equity, in the case of *Barton v Armstrong* ([1976] AC 104) where the defendant sought to avoid debts relating to sale of shares on the grounds of coercion, it was held that the

equitable rule which enabled a contract entered into as a result of fraudulent misrepresentation to be set aside applied in cases of fraud.

However, there appeared to be no direct authority on the availability of contributory negligence, or its equivalent in equity, as a defence to a claim based on bribery, as opposed to deceit or fraud.

But his Lordship could see no sensible reason for drawing a distinction. If the defendants had dishonestly induced the plaintiffs' employee to act to the plaintiffs' disadvantage, it should not matter whether he had been deceived by deception, by threats or by bribery.

As in the case of deceit, the defendant could not reduce his responsibility merely because the plaintiff had the opportunity to intervene but failed to do so.

There needed to be something more something to put him on notice of the dishonesty and a consequent failure by him of reasonable prudence. There was nothing of that kind pleaded in the defence.

There was no allegation that the plaintiff had the opportunity to put him on notice of the dishonesty or of conduct so egregious that he was the author of his own misfortune. If that sort of allegation was to be made, it had to be pleaded.

The mere fact that the plaintiff had the opportunity to put him on notice of the dishonesty or of conduct so egregious that he was the author of his own misfortune, if that sort of allegation was to be made, it had to be pleaded.

Solicitors: Herbert Smith; Simmons & Simmons.

Prejudice to doctors not relevant

Regina v North Staffordshire Health Authority, Ex parte Worthington

Regina v Family Health Services Appeal Authority, Ex parte Same

Regina v East Riding Health Authority and Others, Ex parte Moore and Others

Before Lord Justice Schiemann

[Judgment November 27]

When a family health services authority granted an application to open a pharmacy it had to be satisfied that that was necessary and desirable in order to secure an adequate provision of dispensing services by a closed group of persons which did not include doctors.

Therefore, the possible closure of a surgery as the result of such a grant was not a matter which the authority was obliged to consider. There was no clear legislative intent, under the controlled localities regime, to take into account, when considering applications by persons already on the list, prejudice to the proper provision of medical services.

Lord Justice Schiemann, sitting in the Queen's Bench Division, so held when refusing:

(i) an application by Dr Moore, Dr Marsden and Dr Robinson for judicial review of a decision of the former Humberside FHSA on February 1, 1996 to grant an application by Mr Crump and Mr Watson to provide pharmaceutical services in Holme-on-Spalding Moor;

(ii) an application by Dr Worthington for judicial review of a decision of the former Staffordshire FHSA on January 27, 1995 not to comply with regulation 12 of the National Health Service (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations (SI 1992 No 662) when determining an application by Mr Morjaria for consent to provide pharmaceutical services from additional premises in a controlled locality; and a related decision of the Family Health Services Appeal Authority on February 1, 1996 allowing an appeal by Mr Morjaria.

Mr Michael Beloff, QC, and Miss Helen Mountfield for Dr Moore and Dr Worthington; Mr Timothy Dutton and Mr Andrew Peabes for Humberside FHSA; Mr Duncan and Miss Jane Oldham for the pharmacists.

LORD JUSTICE SCHIEMANN said the applications arose out of disputes between doctors and pharmacists as to whether pharmacists should be allowed to dispense medicines in rural areas where doctors had permission to prescribe and dispense medicines.

The present proceedings arose indirectly from an exception whereby doctors with outline consent from the FHSA might wish to dispense to patients resident in a controlled locality at a distance of more than one mile from a pharmacy.

Under regulation 12 of the 1992 Regulations they could only obtain outline consent after the FHSA

had taken into account any prejudice to pharmaceutical services of general medical services. The chemists thus obtained a degree of protection from competition from the doctors.

Under regulation 4 chemists could only dispense if they were on a pharmaceutical list prepared by the FHSA and it was common ground that when considering an application by a chemist to be included in the list there was no obligation on the FHSA to consider whether the grant of an application would prejudice the provision of medical services.

It was submitted by Mr Beloff that when considering such an application by a chemist the FHSA was entitled as a matter of construction of regulation 4(4) to consider the position of doctors either because it was relevant to what was desirable or because regulation 4(4), while making satisfaction of the matters therein set out a precondition for the grant of a chemist's application, still left room for the consideration by the FHSA of other matters.

As to the first part of the submission his Lordship said that it was clear that the regulation did not require consideration of desirability in order to secure a specific end which had nothing to do with doctors.

As to the second part of the submission, his Lordship accepted the reasoning of Mr Justice Carnwath in *R v North Yorkshire FHSA, Ex parte Wilson* (The Times June 28, 1996) where he said that it

was implicit in the scheme of the regulation that what was desirable in a pharmaceutical service was to be provided by pharmacists and that provision by doctors was the exception.

It was not, he said, part of the scheme of those regulations, or indeed of the statute, that pharmaceutical services should be relied upon to provide financial underpinning for medical services, which were intended to be financed in other ways.

The FHSA was correct to direct its mind to the issues raised by regulation 4(4) without regard to the arguments as to prejudice to medical services in the area.

A third submission put by the doctors had not been made by Mr Justice Carnwath. They argued that when considering an application by a chemist who was already on the pharmaceutical list the FHSA was bound to consider prejudice to the proper provision of general medical services in any locality.

His Lordship said that the obvious difficulty with that submission was that regulation 1(1) referred on its face to an application under regulation 4(2)(a) and that paragraph only dealt with a person "who wishes to be included in a pharmaceutical list". Thus it appeared that the regulation dealt with applications for inclusion in the pharmaceutical lists and did not deal with people already on the list.

It was submitted for the doctors that the court could and should construe regulation 1(1) as though the reference to paragraph (a) of regulation 4(2) had been inserted in error and could be ignored.

After noting that in context that the Secretary of State had declined requests by the BMA for amendments to the regulations in a manner favourable to the doctors, his Lordship said that the general principle must be that the court would follow the clear wording of the legislation. The present wording was clear.

There was no clear wording with which regulation 1(1) was inconsistent. In those circumstances the court had no power, still less a duty to rectify so as to strike out part of the wording.

Solicitors: Lockharts; Wansborough; Willey; Hargrave, Sheffield; Charles Russell.

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Responsibility of medical referee

Regina v Milling, Ex parte West Yorkshire Police Authority

Before Mr Justice Scott Baker

[Judgment November 11]

A medical referee deciding whether a former police officer was totally disabled and incapable of earning any money in any employment was required to direct his attention to whether the disability completely destroyed all earning capacity or whether the officers could earn money from some other employment.

Mr Justice Scott Baker so stated in the Queen's Bench Division when dismissing an application for judicial review by the West Yorkshire Police Authority against a decision of Mr A. Milling, medical referee, that former police officer Steven Pollard was totally disabled within regulation 32(2)(a)(iii).

He had to ask himself

any employment within the meaning of regulation 32(2)(a)(iii) of the Police (Injury Benefit) Regulations (SI 1987 No 156).

Mr Pollard was injured on duty in 1983 and medically retired with a pension in 1985. He was assessed as having 30 per cent disability for life by a doctor on behalf of the Department of Social Security in 1990. He subsequently claimed total disablement and entitlement to a disablement gratuity under regulation 1 of the 1987 Regulations. The matter was referred to the medical referee.

Mr David Mitchell for the police authority; Mr Philip Moon for Mr Milling; Mr Benedict Patten for Mr Pollard as interested party.

MR JUSTICE SCOTT BAKER said that the medical referee had to consider the definition of "totally disabled" within regulation 32(2)(a)(iii). He had to ask himself

whether Mr Pollard was "incapable" by reason of disablement "of earning any money in any employment". It was a simple English expression. The broad question was left to the medical referee.

The police authority submitted that the expression should be construed tightly and strictly. It was a payment on top of the ordinary pension and gratuity.

The medical referee and Mr Pollard had argued for a wider construction. The medical referee suggested that the words envisaged an employer/employee relationship and not self-employed status. Earning and employment connoted receipt of income in relation to services. The picture was one of earning rather than a one-off payment.

In his Lordship's judgment, the critical word was "any" qualifying

both money and employment. The medical referee was required to direct his attention to whether the former officer's disability completely destroyed his earning capacity.

If he was capable of earning some money from some employment then he could not qualify as totally disabled. It was not helpful to try to distinguish between employment and self-employment. The decision was a matter for the medical referee on the facts.

In his Lordship's judgment, the concept of total disablement in the 1987 Regulations was different from its general sense. The regulations were directed to a person's earning capacity and not his ability to do other tasks.

Solicitors: Sharpe Pritchard, Hussain & Singh, Manchester; Hempsons, Manchester; Russell Jones & Walker, Manchester.

Power to extend time for challenge to arrangement

Tager v Westpac Banking Corporation and Others

Before Judge Weeks, QC

[Judgment November 12]

The court had jurisdiction to extend the period of 28 days provided by section 262 of the Insolvency Act 1986 for challenging the

LAW

● NEXT WEEK: WHO SAYS
FINDERS-KEEPERS?

Won't get fooled again

Firms hard hit
by the recession
have become
twice shy, says
Edward Fennell

What has 1996 been like for the top commercial law firms? One revealing insight comes from recent stories in the legal press of partners quitting in droves because of the level of overwork and stress. Both Slaughter & May and Simmons & Simmons have suffered in this way, and complaints of excessive work can be found in many City practices.

The fact that people are starting to "leave the kitchen" shows just how hot commercial law has become. During the past year the temperature has been raised: now that the recession is over, the level of transactions is high.

Terence Kyle, the managing partner of Linklaters & Paines, says: "The real question is not where the work is going to come from but how to attract the most interesting transactions and how to carry them out most effectively."

However, weighed down with work they may be, though, firms are not rushing to recruit en masse. The danger of over-recruitment has been remembered from the 1980s, and most managing partners are trying to squeeze ever greater productivity out of their teams. But with endless weekend work, it is not surprising that some senior lawyers now want out.

Nick Barwood, of Hephherd Winstanley & Pugh in Southampton, says he is receiving applications from London lawyers who want to escape



the pressure of the City and still do 'high-quality' work. His firm, with its long-standing links to B&Q, carved out a national reputation by leading the fight on Sunday trading and now has a retail practice to match that of any London outfit.

But even Hephherd is adamant that it will not recruit just to increase its headcount. "Our reputation is based on specialist expertise and we do not want to dilute that," Mr Barwood says.

'The good solicitors are working long hours'

The result is that good firms in the regional centres, just as much as in London, are working ever longer hours. Stephen Mayson, a management consultant, says that the increased activity is simply amplifying the gap between the good firms and the mediocre. Clients are becoming more selective, which means that successful solicitors are taking more of the market. The less effective firms, beached by the recession and their own "dash

for growth" in the 1980s, are not being carried upwards by a rising tide. Instead, they are stuck with the underlying problems of high overheads, weak management and inadequate expertise. "They hoped," says Mr Mayson, "that when the economy came out of recession, their fortunes would turn. But that has not happened."

Yet while many middle-sized firms are floundering, able individual partners are setting up on their own to provide what they do best without the encumbrance of high overheads.

Ian Clark and Robert Ricketts, who both formerly worked for large City firms, have just completed their first full year in Lincoln's Inn Fields as the niche practice Clark Ricketts. They are specialists in the aviation scene and through writing, lecturing and membership of trade bodies, are entrenched in the close-knit aviation establishment. Mr Clark says: "We have been gratified by how many of our former clients have come with us. We can now offer a highly specialist service without the

problem of the very high fees charged by the larger firms." Mr Clark believes that the legal services market is polarising, as clients seek either first-rank all-round services (from the likes of Allen & Overy and Slaughter & May) or the benefits of specialist expertise from niche practices such as his own.

This argument is borne out by the two big developments on this year's legal scene. First, the merger of Cameron Markby Hewitt and McKenna & Co to create Cameron McKenna confirms the move towards larger firms that offer all-round excellence. Secondly, it now seems clear that accountants are going to be making a strong play to develop top legal practices. The Arthur Andersen experiment with Garrett & Co seems to be paying off. Julia Chain, Garrett's managing partner, says: "Our success this year has vindicated Arthur Andersen's decision to develop its network

of law firms. It has shown that we can offer what clients want." Most top accountancy firms are now laying their plans for UK legal practices, and a merger of a top accountancy and a top law firm is not impossible. Peter Cole, the managing partner of Everheds, says that they would look seriously at an approach from a Big Six firm of accountants.

Many partners, meanwhile, point out that the traditional and career structure within law firms has to be reviewed and that the expectations of young lawyers must be changed.

The mass production of partners during the 1980s has been an object lesson in how not to do it. In well-run firms, partners are likely to become an increasingly elite group who manage strategically, while a new class of legal managers emerges composed of those who are good technically but lack the all-round skills required of partners.

'Partners are likely to become an elite'

Jeffrey Jannuzzo on two fast-track UN agreements

Two key events have occurred in mankind's first globally decided programme of war reparations. Two weeks ago, the United Nations let Iraq begin its first oil sales since it invaded Kuwait six years ago, with automatic seizure of 30 per cent of the proceeds for the UN's war claims fund. And last week the UN War Claims Commission in Geneva announced its first decision on a corporate-governmental claim: the cost to Kuwait of extinguishing the oilwell fires started by Saddam Hussein's troops as they fled the battlefield.

The UN commission decided at its outset in 1991 that it would put humanitarian claims before commercial ones, and has virtually completed the more than two million personal cases, for death, torture and destroyed property. Now that oil-for-reparations sales have begun, the injured will start getting compensation.

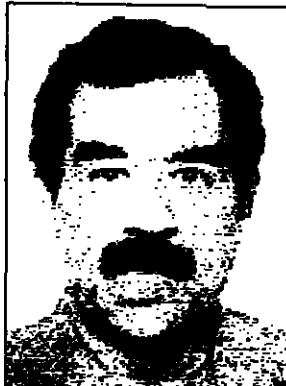
The business world waited to see how the UN would handle corporate-governmental claims. The announced plans were to provide fair procedural rights to Iraq, but to brook no delay, neither from Iraqi foot-dragging nor from endless hearings from panels that liked their jobs too much.

The work of the first panel shows that the UN will act fast and will safeguard Iraq's right to a fair hearing without letting the aggressor nation control the schedule. This panel also functioned far more like a civil law inquisitor than common law judges. It took on the job of investigation and verification, rather than relying on the parties to fight it out.

Kuwait began preparing for the well-blown claim in autumn 1990, shortly after the invasion, when the oil company managers who escaped met in London and received reports that the Iraqis were wiring the wellheads with explosives. They hired the engineering firm Bechtel and laid plans to extinguish well fires if Iraq struck the match.

In 1995, the UN Compensation Commission (the UNCC) chose the panel to hear this \$1 billion claim. In lieu of warehouses of records, Ku-

Deals settle Gulf costs



Saddam: paying reparations

wait submitted a detailed accountants' report by Touche Ross; the records were held for UN inspection. The three commissioners considered the Kuwaiti submissions and issued their first procedural order in November 1995, with extensive interrogatories for Kuwait's response by February 1996. Iraq was given until April 1996 to respond.

In May 1996, the panel issued a second procedural order, with a June 1996 response date. (Iraq was given a final opportunity to reply by September 1996, but did not take it.) Then in July 1996, a UN verification team went to Kuwait to inspect the underlying records, including one of the commissioners along with accounting and legal consultants from the UNCC.

A week of oral hearings followed in July and August 1996, where the Iraqis argued that Allied bombing and artillery, not them, destroyed the nearly 800 vandalised wells. The panel could have bogged down in well-by-well causation trials, but declined to be sidetracked, and ruled that the

evidence showed deliberate Iraqi detonation of wells, even if some were also damaged by Allied action.

It also applied Decision 7 of the UNCC Governing Council, which previously determined that compensable loss included loss from military action by either side. That decision was in effect a vote of the Security Council, because the governing council is the Security Council nations sitting in committee. In this crucial first case, we see proof that the claims process is controlled by the world community, not by the mere conscience of judges or the will of victorious allies. Since the UNCC was established, nearly a third of the world's countries have sat on the governing council, and all their decisions have been taken by consensus.

The panel's decision was confirmed by the governing council last week, a year after the first procedural order. Not bad in a world where mere million-dollar international claims can take a decade.

The panel's gristly work was deciding which costs could be apportioned to the well blowout control claim, and which should be considered elsewhere. For example, Kuwait had to buy capital equipment to fight the fires, and it acknowledged that equipment had continuing value. Eventually, Kuwait was awarded \$610,048,547. About \$337 million was transferred to other claims for later consideration. Interest was handled by the panel's choice of a date, October 15, 1991, as a fair midpoint in the expenses. The governing council will determine the interest rate.

The next round of corporate-governmental cases will start in early 1997. Commissioners have already been chosen and test cases will establish general rules, to be applied to all similar claims. When the well fires were burning, no one thought reparations were possible. Now the UNCC is sprinting to the finish line.

● The author is an international lawyer with Layton Brooks & Hecht in New York.

● Queen's Counsel will return after the break.

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For further information, in complete confidence, please contact Kate Sutcliffe, Adrian Fox or Alison Jacobs (all qualified lawyers) on 0171-495 6862 (0181-789 9933 or 0171-266 1966 evenings/weekends) or write to them at Quarry Douglall Recruitment, 37-41 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4JH. Confidential fax 0171-631 6394. E-mail kate@qdrec.demon.co.uk (not encoded)



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Current Legal Information.
Everything from
banning deer hunting to
'snowball schemes'

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PART-TIME CHAIRMEN OF APPEAL PANELS

The Specialist Training Authority of the Medical Royal Colleges is a new organisation governed by Order of the European, Specialist Medical Qualifications Order 1985). The Authority is establishing an appeal structure for appeals against its decisions, as required by the Order. Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for appointment to chair Appeal Panels in Central London. The panels will be made up of a 71 of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990. No medical knowledge is required, though previous experience of chairing tribunals is highly desirable. A daily sitting fee will be paid in accordance with the LCD rates for legally qualified Tribunal Chairmen. The Authority operates an equal opportunities policy. Further details may be obtained from: Miss Lesley Hawksworth, The Specialist Training Authority of the Medical Royal Colleges, 1 Wilpole Street, London W1M 8AE. Fax 0171-495 0765. Applicants should submit a full CV by 31 December 1996.

Doubts surround shape of King George field

Mr Mulligan bruised a foot



edition.

CHRIS BRASHER, the former Olympic champion, purchased an early Christmas present and then promptly paid most of the expenses after Maid For Adventure carried his colours to victory at Ludlow yesterday.

Brasher, who won the 3,000 metres steeplechase at the 1956 Melbourne Games, outbid the trainer, Bill Turner, to secure Sleepie, winner of the Tanners Cava Conditional Jockeys' Selling Handicap Hurdle, for 3,600 guineas.

Brasher showed he retained plenty of his old dash when hurrying to the winner's enclosure to welcome back Maid For Adventure, who took the Hoechst Rousell Panacur EBF Novices' Hurdle in style under Barry Fenton. "It must be my lucky day," Brasher said. "I've bought a horse and almost paid for it by winning with one of my own."

Maid For Adventure's trainer, Henrietta Knight, said of her ten-length winner: "She was brought to get chasing and that's what she will ultimately do. But for this season, she'll be aimed at the final of the race at Newbury in March."

The Wantage trainer added: "Chris kindly let Barry keep the mount as our stable jockey, Jason Tiley, is here today, but Barry gave her such a good ride at Newbury last time and he decided to stay loyal to him."

Tiley bounced back from six weeks on the sidelines after sustaining bruised kidneys in a schooling accident when Too Sharp became Knight's second winner of the day in the Tanners Burgundy Handicap Chase.

"I lost three pints of blood and had to have a transfusion," Tiley reported.

"But I've been riding out for Henrietta for three weeks and everything seems to be fine now, especially as I've ridden a winner on my first ride back."

Richard Johnson, last term's champion conditional jockey, gained his fifteenth winner of the term after Super Coin took advantage of Holy Wanderer's last fence mishap to land the Tanners Wines Novices' Chase.

Gerry Hogan, rider of Holy Wanderer, gave up his remaining ride of the afternoon after being badly bruised and shaken in the nasty-looking incident.

Titlow to ride Jedsmi

Lad (11-5) 15l 13m 110yd. grade II n
 (15.850, 10 ran)

191 3rd, Barton Bank (12-0) 3l 4th and One 1
(12-0) neck and 8l 5th (3m 2f 110yd, grade 1 ch
\$131 156 10 ran)

Selection: ONE MAN (nap)

Our Newmarket Correspondent:

ndent: 1.40 ALBEMINE (nap).

502	11-1211	MASTER DRUM 20 (D.F.G.S) (M Batchelor) M Williamson 7-11-7	R Drummond	97
503	121-111	POTTER'S BAY 14 (D.F.G) (Mrs J Potter) D Nicholson 7-11-7	A Maguire	95
504	2FD-151	SUBLIME FELLOW 22 (F.G) (Lady Goldsmith) M Henderson 6-11-7	M A Fitzgerald	93

Chase at Wetherby on Boxing

when it became clear that other jockeys could not com-

1.00 (2m 5l 110yd hole) 1, SUEPTITE (A)

3.00 (2m 4f ch) 1, TOO SHARP (J. Titley, 15-8 fav); 2, Commander (J. Railton, 20-1); 3, Splendid Steel (S. Burrows, 20-1).

CSF. £32.83. Traced. £779.85. Sold for 3,600 gns.

Factory Garden 1/4, 3D, 1/4, 14, 41 K
 Bailey at Upper Lambourn. Tot: £3.30
 £2.90, £1.00, DF: £2.00, CSF: £3.04

11-10 fav Lucia Forte (f), 25 Dolce Notte (4th), 100 Alright Gunner (pu), Gi Moss (5th), Lucy's Choice (pu), 8 ran. NR

Arise, Sparking Buck 101, 101, 111, 271
 Mrs. H Knight at Wantage Tote: £3.00.

Alderbrook's

the Christmas Hurdle at Kempton Park on Friday

possible alternative is a trip to Leopardstown on January 19.

Kim Bailey, his trainer, will walk the course before mak-

Selection: SECRET SPRING

run in doubt

ing a decision but his assistant, Alex Hales, said

stant Alex Hales, said: "Alderbrook is 100 per cent built up and if the new road is

but won't run if the ground is quicker than soft. If he doesn't

run, he could go straight to the Irish Champion Hurdle.

but Kim and owner Ernie Pick will discuss that if he

doesn't run on Friday."

303	523P-52	ALBEMAR 16 (D.F.G.) (Mrs J Cecil) Mrs J Cecil 7-10-10	T Kent	89
304	2F21P-3	INTERMAGIC 27 (D.G.S.) (Wm To Wg Partners) J Fox 6-10-0	S Fox	90
305	211	YET AGAIN 14 (F.G.) (A Griffin) Miss G Holeyway 4-11-0	2nd year	82

TRAINING TWICE 271 3rd of 6 to Second Call in
some chase at Trumper (2m 110rd) won on

DETER (20) 1-21 370 474 THINKING TWICE (21) 1 500000 GIFT-VO

RUNNERS AND HIDERS — SEE ABOVE
 SPECIAL AGENTS

J Upson	3	8	37.5	N Williamson	12	59	20.3
F Downen	3	9	33.3	R Drummond	27	124	13.2
R Pinchall	5	16	31.3	M A Fitzmaurice	17	90	18.9

P. Muehling	5	16	31.2	A. P. McGary	8	44	18.2
Lady Hemeg	4	13	30.8				

(Grade 1: £63,325; 3m) (8 runners)

RUNNERS AND RIDERS — SEE ABOVE

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Runs	%	JOCKEYS	Winnings	Runs	%
M Channon	3	7	62.9	E Murphy	5	23	21.7

D Gandella	6	15	40.0	A Maguire	17	73	21.5
J Lipson	3	8	37.5	H Williamson	12	59	20.3
F Osbourne	3	9	33.3	R Dunswoody	27	124	13.2

P. Nichols	5	16	31.3	M A Fitzgerald	17	90	18.9
Lady Heme	4	13	32.8	A P McCoy	8	44	18.2

REFORD: 1.05 Country Lover, 2.05 High Damsels, Purbeck Cavalier. 3.35 Nordic Breeze.
 LUNTINGDON: 12.30 Karmakaze, Wisley Wonder. LINSFIELD PARK: 1.20 Oakton Wood.
 20 Fancy Design, 3.20 Code Red. MARKET RASEN: 2.35 Lord Vick. NEWTON ABBOT:
 3.35 Bayard. SEDGFIELD: 12.10 Pocomo Gaultie. WINGANTON: 2.20 Kindle's Delight.
 TOLVERHAMPTON: 3.00 Fernat Court, Young Benson.

Former champion regains control of his career away from title-chasing treadmill



Dunwoody's desire for competition is undimmed despite his big-race victories and jockeys' titles

Dunwoody's quest for success fuelled by driving ambition

It is hard to assess exactly where Richard Dunwoody is now. He is the term "champion" behind long ago and has ticked items off the list of greatness with absolute ease: the Grand National (West Tip and Mithras), the Gold Cup (Chatter Party), the Champion Hurdle (Kribensis), three times champion jockey. He rode his 1,400th winner earlier in the season, has the pick of the best horses on both sides of the Irish Sea and, at 32, the respect of all but a very few of that critical breed whose investment he carries every day of the week.

A new video of Dunwoody's career is subtitled *The Perfect Artiste*, which, even allowing for a bit of pre-Christmas hyperbole, is not far off the mark. In it, Graham Bradley offers this assessment: "Richard is phenomenal, dedicated, very hard to beat. He's about as good as I've seen. Francoise apart." Even Dunwoody accepts Francoise's pre-eminence.

Bradley calls Dunwoody "the professional" and just a short time in the Irishman's company justifies the description. Earlier this year, Dunwoody was lured by his nose for adventure to ride his A Snip in the Vekta Pardubicka in the Czech Republic. No jockey this century had ridden the winner of the National and the Pardubicka, but for all Dunwoody's outward concern, this might have been a novice chase at Southwell.

He manifestly failed to be impressed by the mighty Taxis fence "jumped bigger than that in Italy" — or to be wooed into making claims on behalf of his outrageous bravery by an interviewer from Czech television. He was unbothered by the complexity of the layout or the dubious quality of a game

ANDREW LONGMORE



on a National Hunt jockey at the height of his powers

but ageing chaser. What did worry him was the inexperience of the local riders, something out of his control. In the event, his historic quest failed, but for want of speed in his A Snip rather than lack of guidance from on top.

To look at Dunwoody on a horse, even with untrained eyes, is to see the ultimate in control. If there is a flurry of activity on board, it is either time to bail out — though Dunwoody falls more elegantly than most because he tends to see trouble coming — or to mount one of those rhythmic finishes that are the mark of the true stylist.

Otherwise, with head low against the neck, seat down, horse and man are moulded in near inseparable silhouette. Control is important to him, on horseback and in his life: loss of it was at the root of his split from Pipe. Stuck on a treadmill that was

playing havoc with his health and his private life, he had to jump off. The move away from Pipe and the endless pursuit of two-bit winners prompted tales of a new, mellow, Dunwoody. There is truth in the change, but only so much. In his second championship season, 1993-94, he had ridden 59 winners from 357 rides by early December: this year it was 68 from 320. "You should ask my agent about how much I've changed," he said. Or the motorists who have the temerity to block his path. Or his weighing-room colleagues who see the same intense expression and receive the same curt response to their questions during idle moments in a three-mile chase.

"I'm obsessive now, but I'm trying to be obsessive about the right things," he said. Dunwoody has a degree in obsession. The difference from those turbulent days when he drove himself near to a nervous breakdown in his duel with Adrian Maguire is that he knows the source of his obsession. He is obsessed with competition.

If he needs a living reminder of the past, he has only to look across the weighing-room at the new champion, Tony McCoy. "At Leicester recently, I rode a horse Tony could have ridden," he said. "He finished down the field on his and I finished second, but he couldn't see where I was. So he comes rushing up to me: 'Did you win?' 'Yes,' I said, 'hacked up.' And he went off cursing. I could see myself right there."

Dunwoody admits that he has almost everything now: the best horses, the confidence, wealth enough, precious freedom inside an oppressive routine. Yet contentment is not a familiar state of mind.

There is always another challenge. He has hired RBI promotions to take his name widely, has his own ten-minute slot on Radio 5 Live on Friday nights and developed a strong friendship with David Coulthard, the Formula One driver.

Asked if he could walk away from racing tomorrow, Dunwoody said: "Definitely. I can look you in the eye and say that. I've got other ambitions outside racing. I want to get my racing driver's licence next year and set up my own business. I've got tentacles out all over the place. They're just not reached out and grabbed hold of anything yet. So racing is still No 1 in my life."

For how much longer, though? Dunwoody never retired two years

ago and again last month. "I went to Leicester and the meeting was called off and I said: 'Right, that's it. I've had enough,'" he said. "Three days later, I'm at Folkestone and really looking forward to it. I'm very changeable, it's part of my character."

"There is nothing in racing I particularly want to do now. My fulfilment comes from competing, riding decent horses and winning. I enjoy riding at Fakenham as much as Cheltenham or Aintree. I enjoy expressing myself because this is the one thing I do reasonably well." Yes, Dunwoody has changed. He is not just an incomparably impressive jockey these days, he is an impressive man.

LINGFIELD PARK

THUNDERER
2.50 Cadez Le Passage 2.20 Passage Creeping
1.20 The Wyndcliffe Inn 2.50 Walcott Beach
1.50 Effervescence 3.20 Cof Sho No

For Newmarket Correspondent: 3.20 Nothing Doing.

QING: STANDARD DRAW: 5F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST SIS

12.50 EPIPHANY CLAIMING STAKES (Div 1: £2,541; 1m 20) (6 runners)

1 (1) 005165 CEEZE LE PASSAGE 12 (5) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
2 (2) 005166 HENRIY MISS 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
3 (3) 005167 SLIP JG 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
4 (4) 005168 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
5 (5) 005169 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
6 (6) 005170 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4

ETTING: 6-4 Barrow Valley, 5-2 Cadez Le Passage, 5-2 Cof Sho No, 5-1 Hata Summer, 5-1 Northern Chd

1996: NO CORRESPONDING MEETING

1.20 MARY & JOSEPH NURSERY HANDICAP

2-1-0: £2,846; 7f (7 runners)
1 (1) 005165 ROYAL DUTCH 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
2 (2) 005166 HENRIY MISS 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
3 (3) 005167 SLIP JG 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
4 (4) 005168 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
5 (5) 005169 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
6 (6) 005170 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4

ETTING: 6-4 Barrow Valley, 5-2 Cadez Le Passage, 5-2 Cof Sho No, 5-1 Hata Summer, 5-1 Northern Chd

1.50 THREE WISE MEN MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES

(2-1-0: £2,846; 4f) (4 runners)
1 (1) 005165 ROYAL DUTCH 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
2 (2) 005166 HENRIY MISS 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
3 (3) 005167 SLIP JG 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
4 (4) 005168 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4

ETTING: 6-4 Barrow Valley, 5-2 Cadez Le Passage, 5-2 Cof Sho No, 5-1 Hata Summer, 5-1 Northern Chd

2.20 SANTA CLAUD MAIDEN STAKES (£3,469; 1m) (9 runners)

1 (1) 005165 ROYAL DUTCH 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
2 (2) 005166 HENRIY MISS 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
3 (3) 005167 SLIP JG 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
4 (4) 005168 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
5 (5) 005169 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
6 (6) 005170 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4

ETTING: 6-4 Barrow Valley, 5-2 Cadez Le Passage, 5-2 Cof Sho No, 5-1 Hata Summer, 5-1 Northern Chd

2.50 EPIPHANY CLAIMING STAKES (Div 1: £2,529; 1m 20) (10 runners)

1 (1) 005165 ROYAL DUTCH 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
2 (2) 005166 HENRIY MISS 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
3 (3) 005167 SLIP JG 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
4 (4) 005168 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
5 (5) 005169 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
6 (6) 005170 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4

ETTING: 6-4 Barrow Valley, 5-2 Cadez Le Passage, 5-2 Cof Sho No, 5-1 Hata Summer, 5-1 Northern Chd

3.20 REINDEER HANDICAP (£2,541; 2m) (10 runners)

1 (1) 005165 ROYAL DUTCH 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
2 (2) 005166 HENRIY MISS 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
3 (3) 005167 SLIP JG 15 (1) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
4 (4) 005168 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
5 (5) 005169 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4
6 (6) 005170 HATTA SUMMER 30 (10) (W) W. Ryan 5-4-4

ETTING: 6-4 Barrow Valley, 5-2 Cadez Le Passage, 5-2 Cof Sho No, 5-1 Hata Summer, 5-1 Northern Chd

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Runs	W%	JOCKEYS	Wins	Runs	W%
Mr. J. P. O'Connell	10	28	35.7	W. Ryan	10	28	35.7
Mr. J. P. O'Connell	11	22	50.0	D. Halliday	11	22	50.0
Mr. J. P. O'Connell	12	17	70.6	W. Ryan	12	17	70.6
Mr. J. P. O'Connell	13	17	76.5	W. Ryan	13	17	76.5
Mr. J. P. O'Connell	14	17	82.4	W. Ryan	14	17	82.4
Mr. J. P. O'Connell	15	17	88.2	W. Ryan	15	17	88.2
Mr. J. P. O'Connell	16	17	94.1	W. Ryan	16	17	94.1
Mr. J. P. O'Connell	17	17	100.0	W. Ryan	17	17	100.0

TRAINERS' PREFERENCES

Trainers are trainers' preferred races for horses engaged at more than one racing day. Hertsford: 2.30 Smiley Face, Huntingdon: 12.30 Karting, 1.00 The Great Escape, 2.00 The Great Escape, 3.00 The Great Escape, 4.00 The Great Escape, 5.00 The Great Escape, 6.00 The Great Escape, 7.00 The Great Escape, 8.00 The Great Escape, 9.00 The Great Escape, 10.00 The Great Escape, 11.00 The Great Escape, 12.00 The Great Escape, 1.00 The Great Escape, 2.00 The Great Escape, 3.00 The Great Escape, 4.00 The Great Escape, 5.00 The Great Escape, 6.00 The Great Escape, 7.00 The Great Escape, 8.00 The Great Escape, 9.00 The Great Escape, 10.00 The Great Escape, 11.00 The Great Escape, 12.00 The Great Escape, 1.00 The Great Escape, 2.00 The Great Escape, 3.00 The Great Escape, 4.00 The Great Escape, 5.00 The Great Escape, 6.00 The Great Escape, 7.00 The Great Escape, 8.00 The Great Escape, 9.00 The Great Escape, 10.00 The Great Escape, 11.00 The Great Escape, 12.00 The Great Escape, 1.00 The Great Escape, 2.00 The Great Escape, 3.00 The Great Escape, 4.00 The Great Escape, 5.00 The Great 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...and the fact that the ...

John Goodbody tests your knowledge in the Quiz of the Sporting Year

The Mongolian circus is in town... but which footballers are flying high?

JANUARY

- Which former England cricketer was the guest of honour at a lunch given by the United Cricket Board of South Africa during the fifth Test at Newlands, Cape Town?
- A cricketer from which country had electrodes attached to his elbow to transmit three-dimensional pictures, to decide "once and for all" whether he threw the ball?
- Who won the France v England match in the five nations' championship in Paris?
- Which foreign footballer arrived in England to sign for Newcastle United but had to return to Italy because his work permit had not been finalised?
- Who won the men's singles title at the Australian Open tennis championships?
- The son of a famous television commentator announced that he was giving up his job to try to represent Britain at the Olympics (he succeeded). Who was his father?



A: Mike Tyson batters Frank Bruno into submission in March. In which round?

FEBRUARY

- Which swimmer claimed that his positive test for marijuana was the result of passive smoking?
- In which sport did Jackie MacGillivray, a self-confessed enthusiastic amateur, compete against international stars?
- In which sport did *High Fibre* and *Greasy Spoon* participate?
- Which British racecourse was the first to have a mechanical horse to enable jockeys to warm up?
- Which British athlete, running the last leg of a relay, was admonished for waving the baton at spectators and then allowing an opponent almost to catch up before accelerating again?
- Which two former Watford football players did Graham Taylor ask to run the team on his return as general manager at Vicarage Road?
- Who outraged Spaniards by comparing Sierra Nevada to Morocco, but still won two titles there during the Alpine world skiing championships?

MARCH

- Of which rugby player was it said: "He is a person who, in my eyes, has set an example, and people have followed him because of the high standards he has set."?
- There were only 28 runners declared for the Grand National.

This was the smallest number since which year: a. 1964; b. 1970; c. 1979?

- Which West Indies cricketer announced his retirement after their World Cup defeat against Kenya?
- In which athletics event did Kate Staples, Zodiac in *Gladiators*, set a British indoor record?
- Which Scottish rugby union player was knocked out by a punch in the Calcutta Cup match?
- Which two foreign footballers were granted new work permits after the Government changed its regulations?
- Which country knocked England out of the cricket World Cup?
- Who won the Coca-Cola Cup final at Wembley?

APRIL

- In the past 20 years, only one surname has appeared three times in *Wisden's* Five Cricketers of the Year. Which?
- Which American football player, a member of the Chicago Bears Super Bowl-winning team of 1986, joined the London Monarchs?
- How many strokes was Greg Norman ahead of Nick Faldo before the last round of the Masters?
- Who was said by a Football Association official to look like a "tube of Retfreshers" because of the colours of the new England kit?
- Who won the men's race in the London Marathon for the third successive year?
- Who took six for 21, including four wickets in four balls, in his first appearance in the Benson and Hedges Cup?
- Which snooker player, who reached the semi-final of the world championship, was fined £20,000 for assaulting an official?

MAY

- Who said: "It will not help to have one manager on the training field and another watching from the touchline. The players would not know where to look."?
- Who pushed over the referee at the end of the Pilkington Cup final at Twickenham?
- Which runner, returning to competitive track athletics after 20 months, had to take Vicks VapoRub and Paracetamol to help to cure a cold?
- Who said: "You could have knocked me over with a feather when the chairman called me in and told me that I had been sacked."?
- In the cross-code matches between Bath and Wigan, which club scored more points at their own code?
- Which American basketball player retired again, 4½ years after first saying that he was quitting?
- Who avoided being given out leg-before on 15 occasions by throwing his bat towards silly point while padding away the ball?

JUNE

- Which unseeded Slovakian tennis player knocked Monica Seles out of the women's singles at Wimbledon?
- Who was the first female jockey to ride in the Derby?
- Who scored England's first goal in the European football championship finals?
- Who gave up her quest, in mid-Atlantic, to be the first woman to sail non-stop single-handed around the world?



THE TIMES presents the traditional festive challenge — the Quiz of the Sporting Year. Test your knowledge on the milestones and misfortunes that made 1996 such a year to remember, and you may be the winner of six bottles of Glen Ord 12-year-old single malt whisky. The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn — or, if necessary, the entrant with the most correct answers — will receive the award-winning whisky, produced at Muir of Ord, a village on the Black Isle. The six runners-up will receive *Visions of Tennis*, a celebration of the work of the Allsport photographic agency, the official agency of the Lawn Tennis Association. It includes the players, venues and personalities from around the world. *Visions of Tennis* is published by Quiller Press at £16.95.



Prize for the runners-up



B: Oliver Bierhoff wins Euro 96 for Germany. What was unique about his goal in the final?

JULY

- When Paul Gascoigne scored his goal against Scotland in the European championship, over which Scotland defender did he lob the ball?
- David Seaman saved a penalty from which Spanish player to give England an unassailable 4-2 lead in the penalty shoot-out in the quarter-final of the European championship?
- How many successful kicks did England and Germany convert before Gareth Southgate's miss in the penalty shoot-out in the European championship semi-final?
- Who won the Open golf championship at Royal Lytham and St Annes and what was his winning margin?
- Which club had an application for National Lottery money turned down partly because it refused to admit women as members?
- Who partnered Jonathan Stark in the mixed doubles championship at Wimbledon but lost in the quarter-finals?
- Which cricketer admitted that he bowled "absolute rubbish" as he took the first hat-trick of his career in the NatWest Trophy?
- Which cyclist accurately forecast in the Tour de France: "Unless I get sick or injured in a crash, I will win."?
- How many Olympic swimming gold medals did Michelle Smith win?
- Who injured her left ankle badly, but still completed a vault to help the United States to the Olympic women's gymnastics team gold medals and become a national sporting heroine?

- Which overseas footballer scored a hat-trick for his new club on his debut in the FA Carling Premiership?
- Which British Olympic hockey player said after her penalty was saved in the bronze-medal game: "I watched Gareth Southgate in Euro 96 and now I know exactly what he must have gone through?"
- What colour shoes did Michael Johnson wear while completing his 200 metres-400 metres double at the Olympics?
- Which Briton came fourth in an Olympic swimming event, was moved up to third place when the Russian bronze medal-winner was disqualified after a positive drug test, but finally lost the medal when the Russian successfully appealed against his disqualification?
- Who said: "I had my 20 minutes in goal just like everyone else, but I said to someone that I'd played in goal for Newcastle when I was on trial, and I've never heard the last of it?"
- Who broke the world 4,000 metres pursuit record at the world cycling championships in Manchester?

- Against which country did England play, and win, their first match under the managership of Glenn Hoddle — a qualifying game for the 1998 World Cup — and what was the score?
- Which non-league football club, whose player-manager has been sent off 21 times in his 22-year career, signed a five-figure sponsorship deal as part of a £3 million promotional campaign for a soft drinks company?
- Which county won the AXA Equity and Law Sunday League, their first cricket honour for 14 years, and which county won the Britannic Assurance championship?
- Which jockey received a four-day ban for using his whip with "unreasonable force and frequency" after riding Shantou to victory in the St Leger?
- How many winners did jockey Frankie Dettori ride at Ascot in a performance unique on the British Turf?
- In which country was the opening game of the qualifying competition for the 1999 rugby union World Cup played?

- A 12-year-old schoolboy became the hero of the New York Yankees baseball team when his intervention from the stand prevented a fly ball from being caught. Which team was on the receiving end of his action?
- Who finished second to Damon Hill in the Japanese Grand Prix, the final race of the Formula One world championship?
- To which town did Yorkshire County Cricket Club plan to move its headquarters from Headingley, Leeds?
- Which country turned up two hours late for the scheduled kick-off against Scotland in a World Cup qualifying game after a dispute about the quality of the stadium floodlights?
- Which country did the golfers of the United States defeat in the final of the Dunhill Cup at St Andrews, and who won the World Match

Play title for the third successive year?

- Which French-trained horse won the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe at Longchamp?
- Which Nationwide League third division football club had a training session with acrobats at a touring Mongolian circus?

SEPTEMBER

- Which country beat Wales 7-1 in a World Cup qualifying game, the principality's heaviest football defeat for 66 years, and where was the match played?
- Which jockey, on November 21, completed the quickest century of winners in a National Hunt racing season?
- A professional footballer with which club was found to have been positive for cocaine, cannabis and Ecstasy in the same urine sample?
- Who said about his return to competitive sport: "I'm coming back with more vigour than four years ago?"
- David Campese and Jonathan Davies were the same age when



C: Andre Agassi bows out of Wimbledon in June. Beaten by which tennis player?

- they opposed "each other in the Wales versus Australia rugby international? How old were they?"
- Which Sheffield Wednesday player was banned from football worldwide while Fifa, the world governing body, investigated a claim that he had agreed to join two clubs at the same time?

OCTOBER

- What seasonal item was Ed Giddins employed to sell during his 19-month ban from cricket for cocaine use?
- Which former Wimbledon singles champion did Tim Henman beat after receiving a late call-up to compete in the Compaq Grand Slam Cup in Munich?
- As Manchester United beat Rapid Vienna 2-0 to qualify from the European Cup Champions' League, who scored their opening goal?
- About which sport was a film, *Space Jam*, made, in which aliens come to earth to steal the powers of the leading players?
- Who replaced the injured Phil de Glanville as captain of the England rugby union team against Argentina?
- The son of which famous English sportsman decided he would concentrate on professional rugby union rather than country cricket?

HOW TO ENTER THE QUIZ OF THE SPORTING YEAR

FILL IN your answers on the entry form and send it, with your name, address and daytime telephone number, to: Quiz of the Sporting Year, Sports Department, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9DN to arrive by Friday January 10, 1997. The prize will go to the sender of the first all-correct entry — or, if necessary, the entrant with the most correct answers — drawn from those received by the closing date. The Sports Editor's decision is final and correspondence will not be entered into. The winners and solutions will be published on Tuesday, January 14, 1997. The competition is not open to employees of News International, their relatives or agents.

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Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L = lower slopes; U = upper

FOOTBALL

Foul play pervades season of goodwill

IT IS definitely not the season to be merry among overseas footballers. In many places around the globe, sleaze and corruption bring the world game to the end of an impoverished year.

In Brazil, Pelé coined the phrase "the beautiful game", but, in his role as Minister for Sport, he had to dismiss 12 ministry officials in the week before Christmas because of alleged mismanagement of funds. "I came to do an honest job," the greatest player there has been said. With people calling for him, too, to resign, Pelé announced that his 12 unwelcome officials were under suspicion of awarding multi-million dollar contracts without bids to a favoured television and radio station, to a computer service company, and a public relations firm. Moreover, Pelé said, they had been falsifying their expense accounts and using aeroplane tickets issued to athletes.

From Rio to Milan, there, Paolo Maldini, the captain of AC Milan and of Italy, and the son of the new national team coach, may struggle to make the World Cup qualifying game against England at Wembley on February 12. It is not because of the drastic loss of form that has afflicted Maldini and his club—Milan lost yet again on Sunday, 1-0 at home against Parma. Rather, it was the fact that Maldini, the most marked profile in his country, suffered a fractured cheekbone from an elbow. In the same game, George Weah, the world player of the year, twisted an ankle and is also probably out until mid-February. All this, and Paul Ince sent off again, apparently for dissent, during Internazionale's drawn game at lowly Reggina.

On to Belgium and the outbursts of Gilles de Bilde, 25, an international striker, and the main catalyst of Belgian football. During the weekend he punched an opponent, Krist Portie, so severely that he broke the player's nose

ROB HUGHES



Overseas View

and damaged an eye. Doctors are now trying to assess whether the eye can be saved, and Michel D'Hooche, the president of the Belgian Football Association, is contemplating aloud whether de Bilde can be permitted to continue in the sport. Anderlecht, de Bilde's club, are expecting a writ from Portie and the media is clamouring for judicial action.

Two years ago Adolfo Madrid offered de Bilde a fortune to play in Spain. He declined, stating that he was not ready to leave Belgium. Critics say that he never did, and apologists point to his tortured family life—his mother is in an institution for neurological patients and his father suffered a brain haemorrhage last year.

"I think the boy is entitled to psychological assistance," Michel Verschueren, the Anderlecht manager, said. Either that, or a prison sentence, for de Bilde had already been dropped from the national team after allegedly head-butting one male nurse and punching another at the hospital where his father lay ill. Indeed, de Bilde has a suspended two-year jail sentence, for head-butting two Scout leaders in 1992.

One would think that Barcelona, where Bobby Robson is



Maldini, the Italy captain, may miss the game with England in February after his cheekbone was smashed

coach, is a place of relative calm and shelter, but the pressures continue to mount, even in victory. On Sunday Barcelona closed to within two points of Real Madrid by beating Celta Vigo. Yet the lone goal, by Miguel Angel Nadal, was not nearly enough for 80,000 fans in the Nou Camp, who jeered, showed the white handkerchiefs and disparaged the performance.

Now, since the old regime was swept away, the Czech population finds that it cannot even watch its players abroad. There are televisions, of course, but others put such a price on the pay-per-view revo-

lution that football is beyond the means of the people. A German television company, UFA, has the rights to televise Czech Republic World Cup qualifying games. The German price for the Czech team is \$1 million per away game... and, for the first time in 21 years, there was no broadcast of the last game, played in Yugoslavia. Instead of gratitude, because the team lost 1-0, one supporter, Jan Krupka, sat on a bar stool, viewing an old football video, and complaining: "Since 1976, I had not missed one game.

This is progress? It would never have happened under communism." In Guatemala City yesterday shots were fired from the crowd during a league game, killing two players and injuring another, and in Colombia it was reported that armed men had called at the home in Medellín of René Higuita, he of the scorpion save at Wembley. Higuita was not at home, but his maid was. The men forced their way in and exploded a bomb, but, mercifully, injured nobody... merry Christmas.

Transfer activity continued yesterday in the build-up to the crowded holiday programme. Matt Jackson, the Everton defender, travelled to Norwich City to discuss terms after the clubs agreed a fee of £450,000. Jackson should sign in time for the Boxing Day fixture against Queens Park Rangers. Another transfer mystery surrounds Ilie Dumitrescu, the West Ham United midfielder. Romanian news agencies reported yesterday that he will leave England to join America Ciudad, the Mexican side, for a fee of £1 million on December 30.

Australia considers joining race to stage World Cup

BY DAVID MADDOCK

THE Australian Football Association (AFA) will consider a suggestion from Sepp Blatter, the secretary general of Fifa, football's world governing body, that it should bid to stage the 2006 World Cup finals. A spokesman for the AFA said: "It is an interesting concept that we will look at carefully."

Blatter caused a stir when, on a visit to Australia to inspect the facilities under construction for the Olympic Games of 2000, he urged the authorities to bid for the World Cup. "If Australia has the courage to bid for the Olympics, then it should also have the courage and initiative to ask for the World Cup," he said.

Blatter's motives have aroused suspicion in Europe, where England and Germany are expected to compete for the right to stage the finals. The Germans, in particular, questioned why their countryman hinted strongly that the Australians will stand as good a chance as any nation of winning the right to host the tournament.

South Africa and Argentina are also in the running to stage the finals, but history suggests that they should be held in Europe in 2006, after Japan and South Korea jointly host the tournament in 2002.

Should Australia enter the bidding, it will place Terry Venables in an awkward position. As the newly-appointed coach of the Australia team, he will be expected to support fully any bid. Venables, however, will feel divided loyalties after coaching the England team during the successful staging of the European championship in this country.

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Manchester City will have formal talks with Frank Clark, who resigned last week as manager of Nottingham Forest, within the next week. Clark has indicated that he is interested in the vacancy at Middlesbrough, and will speak to Francis Lee, the City chairman, on his return from holiday. City have been searching for a new manager since the resignation of Steve Coppell and Clark is thought to be the preference of Stephen Bolger, a principal shareholder in the club.

Across the city at Manchester United, there was bad news for Gary Pallister, the England defender. He has suffered a recurrence of the back problem that forced him to miss much of last season and is facing a lay-off of up to two months. "We are just hoping Gary can rest and will not be out for as long this time," Alex Ferguson, the United manager, said.

Kilmarnock put faith in Williamson to ensure survival

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

BOBBY WILLIAMSON last night took charge of Kilmarnock as their manager until the end of the season, despite apparently being third choice for the vacancy.

Kilmarnock, the Ayrshire club, confirmed that Williamson is making his move from reserve team coach to manager's office permanent. He has been charged with the task of keeping Kilmarnock, who are second-bottom, in the Scottish League premier division.

The announcement came after the club admitted speaking to Mark Hateley, of Queens Park Rangers, and Alex MacDonald, of Airdrieonians.

Williamson stepped in as caretaker four matches ago after Ronnie Hamilton, the new Kilmarnock chairman, dismissed Alex Totten.

Kilmarnock said that they were "impressed by his qualities" in reference to their talks with MacDonald. MacDonald came within 180 minutes of leading Heart of Midlothian to the Scottish league and cup double in 1986 and has since led Airdrieonians to two Scottish Cup finals.

Hamilton said: "In his short spell as caretaker manager, Bobby has demonstrated he has the leadership qualities required to keep the team where they belong, in the

Jocky Scott, the Hibernian manager, hopes to sign Brian Grant, the Aberdeen midfielder, before the match against Kilmarnock on Boxing Day. Scott is talking to Grant, 32, after agreeing a fee of £75,000 with Aberdeen.

premier division. He has the full backing of the board, the playing staff and loyal Kilmarnock supporters, who are sure he will do well for the club in the months ahead.

"We would also like to record our appreciation to the board of Airdrie, who allowed us to approach their manager, Alex MacDonald. We had a friendly discussion with him and were deeply impressed by his qualities. At the end of the day, the board decided that results since Bobby took over justified us giving him a chance as club manager until the end of the season."

Williamson has guided Kilmarnock to victories over Heart of Midlothian and Aberdeen and will take the team to Hibernian on Boxing Day.

Dave Bowman, the Dundee United defender, will serve a three-match suspension in January. Bowman was booked in the defeat by Celtic at Parkhead on Saturday and has now gone over the disciplinary points' threshold.

Bowman, 32, will be available for the holiday period, but will miss matches against Kilmarnock (January 4), Dunfermline (January 11) and Heart of Midlothian (January 18).

Meanwhile, Bert Paton, the Dunfermline manager, defended Marc Millar, who will miss almost the whole of January after being suspended for five matches.

"I don't know how Marc has this bad disciplinary record because he's not that kind of player," Paton said.

Peacock travelling on the circle line

THE football career of Gavin Peacock went full circle yesterday when he joined Queens Park Rangers, the club where his professional career began nine years ago.

Peacock, 29, has been on loan at QPR, the Nationwide League first division club, for a month, having fallen out of favour at Chelsea after Ruud Geulink took over as player-manager in the summer. Peacock, a midfielder who scored twice for Chelsea in their 2-0 FA Cup semi-final win over Luton Town in 1994, signed a 3½-year deal for an initial fee of £800,000, which will rise to £1 million after an agreed number of appearances.

"I had options to move

abroad, to France or Spain, on a free transfer at the end of the season, but I'm glad that it has been finally sorted out with QPR," Peacock said. "It's like coming full circle. This is where I started and learnt my trade, and I feel very positive about our promotion chances."

"The management team of Stewart Houston and Bruce Rioch have worked at the highest level and want players who match their drive and ambition for the club.

"I felt it was time to move on. I had some great times at Chelsea and I like to think I had a good relationship with the fans, but now I am 100 per cent committed to QPR and I believe we have all the ingredients we need for success."

Ravanelli attacks Middlesbrough

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

FABRIZIO RAVANELLI has added to the list of problems confronting Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, and fuelled speculation that he may leave Teesside in the new year with a wide-ranging attack on the club and English football.

Ravanelli, the Italy forward, said that training facilities and coaching in England lag behind those in his home country and that he still relies on coaches at Juventus, his former club, for training programmes.

Ravanelli's comments—made on Italian television—will add to the difficulties of Robson, who is struggling to field a team for the Boxing Day fixture against Everton at the Riverside Stadium.

Middlesbrough reported back for training yesterday after the postponement of the game against Blackburn Rovers on Saturday when more than 20 players were unavailable because of illness and injury.

Robson has been trying to assess how many players will be available for selection and has still not ruled out making a comeback himself, although he has not played for a year.

Ravanelli's attack will hardly help to restore dressing-room morale after a run of 12 FA Cup Premier League games without a win and the saga of Emerson's absences from the club.

Ravanelli said: "Here [in Italy] there is a different culture and a different mentality. The English have tons of money, but they lack the

organisation of Italian soccer."

Ravanelli, 28, has scored 16 goals since his £7.5 million signing from Juventus in the summer. "The training facilities are not adequate; the stadiums are nice but the rest is just not there," he said. "For example, there are no gyms and you don't practise very much. I am forced to train by myself, using charts that the Juve trainer faxes to me."

"English players have a natural gift for running, but, as for explosiveness and reaction time, they can't match the Italians. In soccer, you have to do more than run."

Ravanelli has been linked with a move to Manchester United and admitted that he had been alarmed by the slump in Middlesbrough's fortunes. "We are in a difficult

situation and one I did not expect," he said. "Before signing with Middlesbrough, I was asked to come and see the club and they have not been kept. Now we have to regroup and I have to bring the mentality I learnt at Juve. We have to find a way out of this difficult situation."

Robson is keen to strengthen his defence and Bobby Robson, the Barcelona manager, confirmed yesterday that Middlesbrough have increased their offer for Miguel Angel Nadal.

Sunderland are close to completing the signing of Mamadou Diallo, the Senegalese winger, for £700,000. Diallo, 24, who plays for Zeytinburnu, in Turkey, impressed Peter Reid, the manager, during a trial at Roker Park.

BOXING DAY FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 3.00 unless stated
* denotes 45-minute match
+ denotes 45-minute match

FA CUP PREMIERSHIP

(1) Aston Villa v Chelsea	(16) Manchester City v Everton
(2) Blackburn v Newcastle	(17) Reading v West Bromwich
(3) Leeds v Coventry	(18) Southampton v Charlton
(4) Liverpool v Leicester	(19) Stoke v Barnsley
(5) Middlesbrough v Everton	(20) Tottenham v Huddersfield
(6) Nottingham Forest v Man Utd	(21) Wolverhampton v Oxford Utd
(7) Sheffield Wednesday v Arsenal	
(8) Sunderland v Derby	
(9) Tottenham v Southampton	
(10) Wimbledon v West Ham	

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

(1) Barnsley	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Bury	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

(1) Barnsley	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Bury	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

SECOND DIVISION

(1) Blackpool	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

THIRD DIVISION

(1) Barnet	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

BELL'S SCOTTLISH LEAGUE

(1) Aberdeen	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

ISLE OF MAN LEAGUE

(1) Alderney	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE

(1) Alderney	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

UNION SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE

(1) Alderney	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

RACING

(1) Alderney	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE

(1) Alderney	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

WINSTON LEEDS LEAGUE

(1) Alderney	(11) Bolton	(21) Walsley	(31) Walsley
(2) Burnley	(12) Bradford	(22) Walsley	(32) Walsley
(3) Carlisle	(13) Burnley	(23) Walsley	(33) Walsley
(4) Chester	(14) Colchester	(24) Walsley	(34) Walsley
(5) Exeter	(15) Crewe	(25) Walsley	(35) Walsley
(6) Grimsby	(16) Gillingham	(26) Walsley	(36) Walsley
(7) Hartlepool	(17) Huddersfield	(27) Walsley	(37) Walsley
(8) Lincoln	(18) Luton	(28) Walsley	(38) Walsley
(9) Mansfield	(19) Millwall	(29) Walsley	(39) Walsley
(10) Notts	(20) Peterborough	(30) Walsley	(40) Walsley

RADIO 1

7.00am Dave Pearce 9.00 Simon Mayo
12.00am Lisa 1.00am Chris Warren's
Christmas Eve special 5.30am Newsday
5.45am Chris Warren 7.00am Mary Anne
Hobbs 10.00am Christmas Eve special
10.00am Christmas Eve special 10.00am
Warner 11.00am Cameron Dances
11.00am Chris Warren 12.00am Chris
Warren, with the Early Breakfast Show

RADIO 2

6.00am Alex Lister 7.30am Wake Up to
Wogan 9.30am Ken Bruce 12.00am Christmas
with Elvis 1.00pm Christmas Comedy
Classics 2.30am Steve Wright 3.30am
Edna's Aural Experience 4.30am
Verano 5.00am The Nuts and a Tangerine
6.00am After Ego 7.00am Low Grade 8.30
Kaseo 9.00am The Night Before Christmas
10.00am The Season Christmas Tale 10.30
am Christmas Eve special 11.00am
11.00am Carols by Candlelight 12.00am
Patrick Lint 3.00am Mo Dulla

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports, incl. at 5.45
Wake up to Money 6.00am Sports
Are Doing It for Themselves 6.30am Kind of
Radio 7.00am The Breakfast Programme
9.05am The Magazine 11.05am Never Walk
Away (2x) 11.25am The Food of Love and
Hate (2x) 12.00am Medley with Mair
2.00pm Russell on Five, includes
Entertainment News 4.00am Nationwide
7.00am News 7.30am News 8.00am
Manchester 8.05am Football Forever 9.05am
Cinderella Man 10.05am Brief Lives 96
11.05am Weather Reports 12.05am After
Hours 2.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

5.00am Chris Ashley and Sandy War
7.00am Paul Ross 9.00am Scott Chisholm
10.00am Philip Dodson 2.00pm Tommy
Boyd 4.00am Peter Dealey 7.00am Sports
Zone 10.00am James White 1.00am Jan
Coles

WORLD SERVICE

All times in GMT. News on the hour.
5.30am Europe Today 6.30am Europe
Today 7.15am On the Shelf 7.30am News
7.50am Musical Copenhagen 8.10am Words
of Faith 8.15am Stories by W.W. Jacobs
8.45am Good Books 9.00am World Business
Review 9.15am Gulet Uniquely 9.45am Sport
10.30am BBC English 10.45am On the Shelf
11.30am Meridian Feature 12.00pm World
Business Report 12.15am Britain Today
12.30am Print the Legend 1.25am Outlook
2.30am Multitrack 3.05am Sport 3.15am
Multitrack Sessions 3.30am Heritage 4.15am
World Today 4.30am BBC English 4.45am
Britain Today 5.30am World Business
Report 5.45am Sport 6.00am Print the Legend
7.00am Outlook 7.30am Meridian Feature
8.00am Britain Today 8.15am Britain Today
9.30am Meridian Feature 10.30am World Today
10.45am Sport 11.10am Voicebox 11.15am
Multitrack Sessions 11.30am Meridian
Feature 12.30am Folk Routes 12.45am Britain
Today 1.30am Outlook 1.55am Words of Faith
2.30am Composer of the Month 3.15am Sport
3.30am Meridian 4.30am Europe Today

CLASSIC FM

4.00am Mark Griffiths 6.00am Mike Read
9.00am Henry Kelly 12.00am Susan
Simons 2.00pm Concerto Marc-Antoine
Charpentier (Naxos) plus Les Instruments
Santanderi (Naxos) Concerto Grosso in
G minor, Op. 5, No. 8, Christmas
Concerto 3.00am James Crichton 6.00am
Classics of Our Time 8.00am Evening
Concerts (Naxos) Les Instruments of
Vivaldi (Concerto in E, RV720, Il Riposo,
per i Santissimi Naxos) 10.00am Midnight
Concert with Michael Mappin 1.00am Mid
Cooper

VIRGIN RADIO

5.00am Jeremy Clark 10.00am Graham
Dear 1.00pm Lynn Parsons 4.00am Mike
Johnston 6.00am The Concert (PWL) Robin
Coles (AM) 10.00am Howard Pearce
2.00am Randall Lee Rose

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, includes
Chapman (Naxos) sur les
instruments (Naxos) Kind of
(Symphony No. 4), Byrd
(Lutaly My Sweet Little
Baby), Dargun (Naxos) and
IV. Naxos (Naxos) Kind of
Eiger (String Quartet in E
minor, Mistry Quartet) 8.50am
5.00 Morning Collection
Includes Mozart (Fute Quartet
in A, K283), Mendelssohn (Six
Songs without Words, Op. 67,
Book II), Schubert (The Swan
of Tivoli, Legends)
10.00am Musical Encounters
Includes Victoria (Kyrle
(Offshoot Defunctum);
Weber (Grand Duo
Concertant, Op. 38)
12.00am Composer of the Week:
Tchaikovsky
1.00pm News, the BBC
Orchestra, BBC Scottish
Symphony Orchestra under
Omar Vanska. With Boris
Berezovsky, piano. Musso-
orgsky, an Arseny-Korakov
(A Night on a Bare Mountain);
Rachmaninov (Piano
Concerto No. 3 in D minor)
2.30am Ensemble, Penny Croft
introduces a musical by pianist
Leon McCawley, a
pianist at the 1933 Leeds
Piano Competition. Four
Piano Pieces, Op. 84
Barber (Nocturne, Hornage to

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping (LW) 6.00am
Shipping 6.10am Shipping
Today 6.20am Shipping for the Day
6.30am Today 8.55am Shipping
9.00am News 9.05am Call Nick Ross
10.00am Something to Write Home
About (LW) 10.10am Today
Hannah McCall takes her
vaudeville show Stop Calling
Me Vernon to India, where
they sample the delights of
Bollywood (3/4)
10.10am Daily Service (LW)
10.15am On This Day (LW)
10.30am Woman's Hour, Op. 57,
Book II, Schubert (The Swan
of Tivoli, Legends)
11.30am Medicine Now
12.00am News; You and Yours
12.25pm Random Edition, Peter
Snow introduces stories from
February 17, 1743 12.55am
Weather
1.00am The World at One
1.40am The Archers (1) 1.55am
Shipping
2.00am News; Thirty Minute
Theatre; Babouk, by
Nick Winterton. With Michael
Maloney (1)
2.30am Personal Records, Jeremy
Nichols takes the
record collection of Dame
Antoinette Sibley
3.00am A Festival of Nine Lessons
and Carols, from King's
College, Cambridge (1)
4.00am The Christmas
Special: The Christmas
Tree, Nigel Cassidy
investigates the Christmas
tree industry
5.00pm 5.50am Shipping 5.55am
Weather
6.30am Six O'Clock News
6.30am A Little of What You Fancy,

by H. E. Bates. With David
Jason and Pam Ferris as Pop
and Ma Lavin (5/4)
7.00am News 7.05am The Archers
7.20am Memory Loss, Simon Ray
profiles the 19th-century poet
about him. His first collection
was a best-seller, but when
his physical and mental
health collapsed he was
committed to an asylum
where he ended his life in
obscurity in 1864 (1)
8.00am Ad Lib, Robert Robinson
talks to the music-makers
who offer their charts a head-
start in the mating game (1)
8.30am Christmas
Special: John Peel
introduces a selection of
confessions about family life
over the festive period
9.00am The Archers (1) 9.15am
Shipping
9.20am News; Frank Delaney goes
in search of the locations
depicted by Gustav Flaubert
9.30am Kaleidoscope
Features Robert Dawson Scott
examines the emotional
impact of musical notation (1)
9.55am Shipping
10.05am The Archers (1) 10.15am
Shipping
10.20am News; The Archers (1)
10.30am Shipping
10.45am Book at Bedtime: High
Tree, Nigel Cassidy
investigates the Christmas
tree industry
11.00am Masterbrain
11.30am Shipping
12.00am Shipping
12.05am Shipping
1.00am A Little of What You Fancy,

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1: FM 97.6-99.8, RADIO 2: FM 88.0-
90.2, RADIO 3: FM 90.2-92.4, RADIO 4: FM 92.4-94.8, LW 158; MW
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RACING 31

Dunwoody's quest for success fuelled by driving ambition

SPORT

TUESDAY DECEMBER 24 1996

CRICKET 35

Sussex exodus continues as Wells joins Kent



Lynagh conjures up cup treat

Leicester and Bath set for final rematch

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL LYNAGH, the former Australia captain, clearly has a future selecting numbers for the National Lottery. He was invited by the Rugby Football Union to make the draw yesterday for the sixth round of the Pilkington Cup and conjured up a round that will see the demise of a clutch of former finalists.

Lynagh, the world record points scorer in international rugby who is now playing stand-off half for Saracens, gave his employers the satisfaction of a home draw. He then promptly paired them with Wasps before going one better and pulling last May's finalists, Bath and Leicester, out of the bag: English rugby's big two are paired together for the seventh time in 11 years.

Next Lynagh produced three local derbies which should ensure full houses at Orrell — who play Sale — Northampton, who must hold off Coventry's aspirations, and Gloucester, who will meet their near-neighbours from Bristol. "I don't know whether my old friend, Bob Dwyer, will thank me for that," Lynagh said at Twickenham.

Dwyer, the former Australia coach, is now Leicester's director of coaching. Never mind Leicester, Lynagh's own colleagues might have hoped for better than to play the Wasps team that beat them so convincingly in the league last September when Lynagh himself suffered a dislocated shoulder that prevented him from playing for six weeks. "At least we will have them at home this time," he said. "Last time we played them we were still on a bit of a high after beating Leicester, but Wasps played extremely well, we were never in the game."

Since then Wasps, who have

played Saracens only once in the cup, have buzzed to second in the league table, where they have a game in hand on Leicester, the leaders. They have yet to experience the atmosphere at Enfield where, this weekend, Saracens will parade their latest signing, Francois Pienaar, the former South Africa captain, who yesterday paid his first visit to the North London ground.

Bath and Leicester have played in two of the past three finals and neither has been a great advertisement for the game. Last season Leicester were on the verge of victory before a controversial penalty try, converted by Jonathan Callard, sent them to a single-

they are successful, they will be forced to postpone the meeting with Bath because the European final, which takes precedence, is also scheduled for January 25. In that event, the Pilkington Cup game is likely to be played on the first available league weekend, February 8.

Gloucester and Bristol will rehearse their tie this weekend, when they meet in the league at Bristol. "There isn't much between the two sides in the league," Gareth Chilcott, Gloucester's commercial manager, said. "The great plus for Gloucester is that we have been slowly building our performances after a hard start, whereas Bristol have gone the other way."

The two West Country teams have managed to avoid each other in the cup since 1986, but it is six years since Gloucester last appeared in the final, and eight years for Bristol. Even so Gloucester's rebuilding, under Chilcott and Richard Hill, has not gone unnoticed and informal approaches are said to have been made to both men from their old playing haunts in Bath, whose management is somewhat unsettled.

"It will be a huge game and if Gloucester beat them in the league, Bristol are in crisis time," Chilcott said. "A cup run is very important, for finances and everything else, but the league is the priority. Gloucester are playing with a lot of confidence now and that could prove to be the difference between the two sides."

Harlequins, the 5-2 favourites with the bookmakers, will give Rotherham, sixth in the second division, a lucrative tie. The Yorkshire club have never been further than the fourth round.

Referees settle, page 32

Australia recall Langer and Hayden

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

MATTHEW HAYDEN, the Queensland opener, and Justin Langer, the Western Australia left-hander, were recalled yesterday to the Australia cricket team for the third Test match against West Indies, in Melbourne, which starts on Boxing Day.

Hayden, who should make his second Test appearance, replaces the injured Matthew Elliott, while Langer, 26, returns after an absence of three years. Langer made an unbeaten 274 against South Australia in Perth on Sunday and has scored 598 runs this season at an average of 119.60. He takes over from Ricky Ponting, the young Tasmanian, who will instead play for Australia A against Pakistan in a one-day match on Saturday.

Steve Waugh, the all-rounder, has recovered from the groin strain that forced him to miss the second Test, in Sydney. He proved his fitness beyond doubt at the weekend with a match-saving, 9½-hour 186 not out for New South Wales against Queensland. One of those he denied was Michael Kasprowitz, the young Queensland fast bowler, who was wicketless in his first two Tests and has been dropped.

Hayden, 25, played his only Test in South Africa, in March 1994, when he was called in at the last minute after Mark Taylor was taken ill. He has averaged more than 60 in Sheffield Shield matches. He scored 224 for an Australian XI against West Indies in Hobart last month.

Australia lead the five-Test series 2-0 and need only a draw in Melbourne to retain the Frank Worrell Trophy.

Australia XI: M. Taylor (captain), M. Hayden, M. Waugh, S. Waugh, J. Langer, M. Bennett, G. Blower, J. Healy, S. Warner, P. Pollard, J. Gillespie, G. McGrath.



The Redskins played their final American Football match at RFK Stadium, Washington DC, on Sunday night, when they beat Dallas Cowboys 37-10. The Redskins are leaving their home of 35 years for a new 78,600-seat stadium five miles away in Landover, Maryland

Dalglish scouts around for nice sideline with Rangers

By KEVIN MCCARRA

WITH a terseness that the man himself must have admired, the signing of Kenny Dalglish was announced in a mere 117 words yesterday. The brevity of the press release confirming that he is to work for Carnegie Sports International, a company owned by David Murray, the Rangers chairman, contrasted with the lengthy conjecture that has surrounded Dalglish since he was removed from his position as director of football at Blackburn Rovers early this season.

It had been reported that the former Liverpool manager would be taking up a post with Rangers, whom he supported as a boy, to persuade leading footballers around the world to sign for the club. Now, the only reference to such a role is to be found in a sentence so heavily qualified as to be tentative.

After describing Dalglish's duties with Carnegie, the statement continues: "He will also, if required, from time to time assist in player recruitment for Walter Smith at

Rangers Football Club." A spokesman for Carnegie suggested that Dalglish, a former Celtic player, will not be integral to operations at Ibrox and may have to approach the club to propose transfers.

"If Rangers like what he offers and take what he offers, no doubt there will be some reimbursement to Carnegie," David Southern said. "The Murray International companies all work autonomously." Of course, it would be

foolish to underestimate the quality of advice given by a man who ignored charges of profligacy when taking Alan Shearer to Blackburn Rovers for £3.3 million and eventually saw him sold to Newcastle United for £15 million.

Dalglish's title at Carnegie, however, is "New Business Development Manager" and, primarily, he is expected to attract sportsmen and sponsors to the marketing company. Carnegie also runs the Loch Lomond World International, an event of particular interest to a golfer as enthusiastic as Dalglish. It is likely that he will continue to live in Southport.

Meanwhile, Tommy Burns, the Celtic manager, has asked that Pierre van Hooijdonk set aside his contractual dispute with the club for the time being. "This was a big enough season already without obstacles being put in our way," Burns said. "Negotiations over pay rises and contracts should be left until the end of the season."

Williamson's job, page 37
Overseas view, page 37



Dalglish: recruiting role

County seek new direction on the Forest footpath

Dismissive attitudes are prevailing in Nottingham, according to Richard Hobson

MANAGERIAL upheaval is becoming commonplace in Nottingham. Four days after Frank Clark resigned as Forest manager, the general manager across the River Trent at Notts County, and Steve Thompson, the team manager, were dismissed after an emergency board meeting yesterday.

Derek Pavis, the County chairman, is a former vice-chairman of Forest and has kept a close eye on affairs at the City Ground. It is perhaps not surprising, given the elevation of Stuart Pearce to caretaker manager of Forest, that Pavis should have handed temporary responsibility to the mainstay of his side's defence.

Gary Strodger, 31, thus becomes caretaker-manager. He will be assisted by Tony Agana, a striker who became the club's record signing when he arrived from Sheffield United for £680,000 five years ago. They will hope to find the kind of instant success at Watford on Boxing Day that Pearce enjoyed on Saturday, when Forest beat Arsenal 2-1.

Five managers or management teams have been dismissed from Meadow Lane in the past 27 months, with Howard Kendall the most



Murphy: stability

Arsenal protest about Wright's dismissal

ARSENAL have submitted an official complaint with the Football Association about the sending off of Ian Wright at Nottingham Forest on Saturday. Stephen Lodge, the referee, and John Holbrook, his assistant, will now be sent a video of the incident in which Wright barged into Nikola Jerkan, the Forest defender.

An FA spokeswoman said: "We will be asking for their observations before deciding what action to take." Lodge, who relied on evidence from Holbrook before showing the red card to Wright, confirmed that he had dismissed Wright for "violent conduct, which carries an automatic three-match ban."

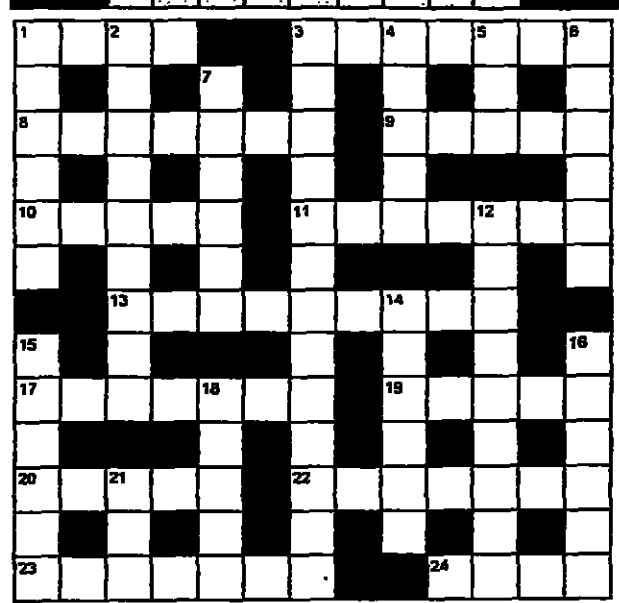
"I am sending off my report

to the FA today and that has to remain confidential," he said. "I did not see the incident involving Wright, my assistant did. However, I would be prepared to view the video, provided that that request came from the FA."

Matthias Sammer, the Germany sweeper, has won the coveted Golden Ball award. The trophy is awarded by France Football magazine after a vote by football journalists throughout Europe.

Sammer finished just ahead of Ronaldo, the Brazil forward who plays for Barcelona. Alan Shearer, of Newcastle United and England, was well back in third place. Eric Cantona, the Manchester United captain, finished seventh.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 973

- ACROSS
- Rank above viscount (4)
 - Addition to will (7)
 - Half man/half horse (7)
 - In a while (5)
 - Major overhaul (of eg ship) (5)
 - Flair-bladed spoon (7)
 - 12 of stone-walling spokesman (2,7)
 - Son of Polonius (Hamlet) (7)
 - Grey/white wader (5)
 - Stop! (nautical) (5)
 - Love affair; story of one (7)
 - A Creek (7)
 - Mark of blow; part of shoe (4)
- DOWN
- Play it again! (6)
 - Project (budget) for specific use (4-5)
 - Decorated pine (9,4)
 - Mouth of eg Nile (5)
 - Pet; whip (3)
 - Cowboys' tether (6)
 - Play (6)
 - Statement (9)
 - Disinter (6)
 - Chemical whitener (6)
 - Purpose; determined (6)
 - Tax of one-tenth (5)
 - Sicken (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 972

ACROSS: 1 Slab 3 Pulliser 8 Not/able 10 Print 11 Uncalled-for 13 Au pair 15 Runway 17 Queue-jumper 20 Aware 21 Daylong 22 Latitude 23 Vein

DOWN: 1 Singular 2 Aztec 4 A level 5 Lap of luxury 6 Skid Row 7 Role 9 Belligerent 12 Hydrogen 14 Piquant 16 Banded 18 Prove 19 Maul

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 969

In association with BRITISH MIDLAND

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